

# **Horizon**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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## **SWISS NUMBER**

**THE SWISS PREDICAMENT**

**THE VAUDOIS SCHOOL**

**THE ARTS IN SWITZERLAND**

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**FEBRUARY VOL. XIII, No. 74 1946**

***Edited by Cyril Connolly***

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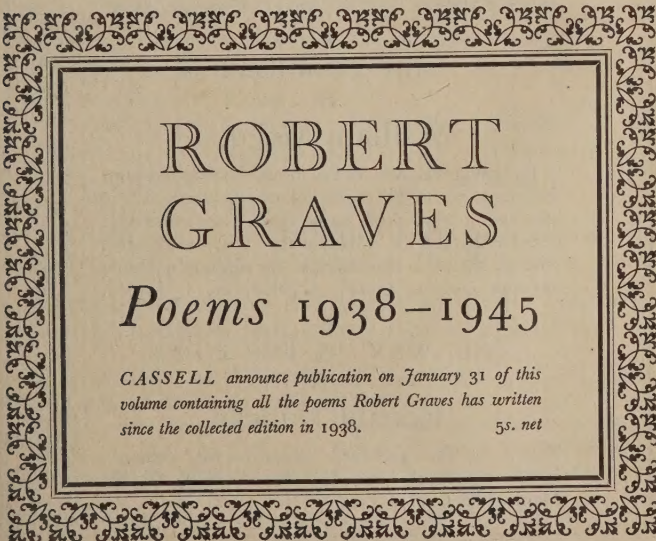
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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMMENT	77
THE SWISS PREDICAMENT:	
I—SWITZERLAND IN EUROPE	Jean-R. De Salis 85
II—THE REPUBLIC OF THE LITTLE MAN	Hans Schmidt 89
III—THE CULTURAL POSITION OF GERMAN SWITZERLAND	{ Dr. Karl Georg } Schmid 93
IV—KARL BARTH AND GERMANY	Ernest von Schenck 101
THE VAUDOIS SCHOOL:	
REPOS. DOMINICAL	Pierre-Louis Matthey 104
BAIN D'UN FAUCHEUR	Gustav Roud 106
INTRODUCTION TO C.-F. RAMUZ AND EDMOND GILLIARD	Louis Junod 108
IN THE VALLEY OF THE RHÔNE	C.-F. Ramuz 110
EXTRACTS FROM 'JOURNAL'	Edmond Gilliard 117
ROUSSEAU AND THE FACE OF LOVE	Marcel Raymond 120
THE ARTS IN SWITZERLAND:	
ON A CERTAIN ASPECT OF SWITZERLAND	Pierre Courthion 128
THE PEASANT PAINTERS OF APPENZELL	{ Dr. Christophe } Bernoulli 133
HEINRICH WÖLFFLIN:	
HIS MEANING FOR EUROPE	Dr. Georg Schmidt 136
SWISS COMPOSERS OF TODAY	Ernest Ansermet 141
REPRODUCTIONS OF PAINTINGS BY SWISS ARTISTS	
appear between pages 128 and 129, and 132 and 133	

The editorial and publishing Offices of HORIZON are at 6 Selwyn House, Lansdowne Terrace, W.C.1.—Six months' subscription, 12/6 net, including postage; U.S.A.—\$3.25 (\$6.00 per annum); France—70 francs per copy. Agents for U.S.A.: Gotham Book Mart, 51 West 47th Street, New York City; Canada: The Jonathan David Co., P.O. Box 204, Station H, Montreal, 25. For advertising terms please write to The Business Manager, Terminus 4898

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# COMMENT

THE journey from Paris, in the July heat-wave, was a nightmare of discomfort. The train, leaving at nine in the evening, did not reach the Swiss frontier till noon the next day; foodless, waterless, seatless, the occupants stood in all the carriages as well as the corridors while the train passed the long hours of tropical night panting and blowing beside some dried-up water-hole. Old, wild-eyed, and orange with grime, those who persisted into the Jura, reached the Swiss escarpment, stretching their legs by the buffetless frontier station. Then suddenly Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, the Val de Travers! After trout and ham and two kinds of white wine at the first Swiss station, Les Verrières, we became tourists—no longer those mean suspect civilian figures, shady and shadowed, which anyone not in uniform on a European train invariably appears—but tourists with guide books, hotel-folders, packages of cigarettes and the *Journal de Genève* under our arms, while the neat bright electric train rattles over the torrents, brushes the spruce trees, cascades from bright sun into black pine-shadow and back again, coasting along the mountain shoulder of the Val de Travers, whose chalets and trout-streams and widening pastures of the Areuse, unfurl themselves far below. Such intoxication, to those deprived of it since 1939, that every sleeper on the track, every cable and pylon, every newly born aroma of mountain sunlight and fir-forest and the name of every station seemed the last unbearable saturation-point in the rebirth of feeling—and then when this saturation seemed reached came the spectacle, quivering in the noontide haze, blue as the Aegean, green as Cumberland, shot by the copper sulphate and the azure of the sky, of the blue-green iridescence of the vineyards tumbling down, between their limestone walls with the name of the grower painted on them in bright black letters, into the lake of Neuchâtel. This dazzling lake, first reminder that fresh water can be coloured, we follow through the afternoon heat, until we really can feel nothing any more. The names become German, the vines vanish and suddenly we are on the hotel balcony in Berne. I had almost forgotten that hotels had balconies. This one surely overlooks one of the most lovely views in the world; a near vista of pleasant hill suburbs gives way to mountain and forest, beyond these ranges are the perpetually white

peaks of the Oberland with their creamy glaciers, while directly underneath the hotel, uniting all the landscape and seeming to rush straight at the spectator like a giant sword-blade, flows the green arrowy torrent of the Aar. On these summer evenings, or in the morning for breakfast, one would sit out on this balcony, under the awning, with coffee and fruit and some immensely provincial Swiss newspaper, watching the lights come out, or the extraordinary procession of heads in the water, for the Bernese method of bathing is to throw yourself into the Aar at one point and let the current carry you down for half a mile. The bodies shoot by like brown matches, occasionally followed by some shavings which turn into a riotous canoe. I know of no city of Berne's size where the country and the pleasures of the country are carried like this right up to the hotel door. The town of Berne is, after five years of England, sheer hallucination. The streets are all arcaded and only interrupted by baroque churches and palaces. The houses are all window-boxes, the squares all fountains, the lighting like a new ballet, the air all oxygen. The shops are like our first Christmas tree; indeed the shops of Berne and of the Bahnhofstrasse in Zürich must rank at this time among the best in the world. Watchmakers have such dazzling exhibitions of gold and chronometry that one ends by annihilating desire through the multiplicities of choosing. Watches with old-fashioned Second-Empire lettering whose case is a flat twenty-dollar gold piece neutralize the angular affairs of cubist pin-points; white gold kills red, submersible, waterproof, anti-magnetic, altitude-proof creations cancel out the kind that wind themselves up by the motion of the wrist; tiny finger-nail triumphs in platinum and diamonds vie with monsters bearing on their dials large as a florin, the days of the week, month, year, signs of the Zodiac and phases of the moon. Patek Philippe (*très chic*), Zenith, Longines, Omega (*très à la mode*), Universal end by reducing the purchaser, like a Pavlov dog, to a state of nervous breakdown and one turns gratefully to the clock department, where the mysterious Atmos clock by Jaeger Lecoultre, an experiment in perpetual motion working from the minute daily changes in the room's temperature, reigns in solitary splendour. And what is not a watchmaker's is a clothes shop, or a Bally shoe window or a tobacconist, where every known make of cigarette and cigar can be supplied in hundreds. One comes to hate the tobacconists in the end almost as much as the jewellers—or the chemists with their innumerable layers of vitaminized tooth-pastes and hair-restorers, their nylon brushes and electric razors, with all these gadgets which exert an increasing tension on our newly born free will. This fantastic luxury, this high bloom of materialism, carried out also in wine-shops, pastry-cooks and hotels, where laundry comes back the next day and where waiters are never rude, is undoubtedly the supreme



achievement of Switzerland today. There is no country in the Old World where the Craft of Living (I am not so sure about the Art) has reached such perfection, where, for those who have the money, the commonplace routine been brought to such a peak of æsthetic efficiency and pleasure. Witness Swiss trains, paradises on wheels, clean, fast, silent, superbly windowed, wonderfully catered for; hotels like old honeymoon visions from the past; cities where the old and new architecture is indistinguishable; towns which are solidly compact of beauty and tradition as a Renaissance wood-cut, yet to which plastics and new light-metal alloys or experiments in street illumination have given a new kind of abstractionist grace and lightness, floodlit town halls, dust-free offices, suburbs worthy of great Corbusier, to whom in fact they gave birth. . . .

To fly from London to Zürich, as one could in the past in one hop, is to leave a city three-quarters of which is dirty, unhealthy, moribund and obsolete, and be transported to the most progressive industrial town in Europe, with the best-built workers' dwellings, the healthiest factories, to a city which is fighting a constant battle to keep itself from expanding, where the proportions kept between man, mountain and lake are regarded as the key to a general harmony and where the wonderful salubrity of the air, manifested in experimental thought, encourages in art a daring and rarefied curiosity—as witness Klee, Gideon, Dada, Joyce and Jung.

What price has Switzerland paid for this bracing and ever-present material progress? A certain price in guilt and smugness—for guilt and smugness are the hall-mark of the neutral; not to have been bombed, not to have been invaded, not to have been ruined in the cause of freedom, for a country whose love of freedom is hereditary, must occasion much subconscious uneasiness. And an internal price has been paid as well, for Switzerland is now a country surfeited with luxuries, choked by its own gold, yet where the necessities of life are still scarce and dear. The working-class cannot afford the tea-shops and the hotel-balconies, their housing conditions are often bad, they have suffered from the strict food rationing, for the luxuries to alleviate it have been outside their reach. The Swiss predicament is partly due to the country having no commodities to sell but jewellery and precision instruments on the one hand, and sun, air, snow and lake-water on the other. The selling of these elements it has, through its hotel industry, raised to a fine art, but they must be sold only for textiles and foodstuffs, and few today are the countries which can supply them.

The Swiss townsman is still but at one or two removes from the peasant. The peasants have had to contend for centuries with the intractable Alps and consequently the character of Swiss industrialism is greedy and thrifty. The typical German Swiss, with their close-set eyes, thin

lips and shrewdly stupid expressions, sometimes fanatically gangling and idiotic, are not among the most immediately appealing of men. Yet these philistine urban peasants of German Switzerland, through its great wealth, are now the rulers, potentially, of Central Europe, and this is another factor in the Swiss predicament. Formerly the German Swiss looked to Munich, or Vienna; the French Swiss to Paris; the Ticinese to Milan; they were consciously provincial. Now the roles are reversed. The provinces of Switzerland have unexpectedly gained the economic mastery over their moral and intellectual capitals.

But it's really too hot to listen to these arguments. Let's be tourists again. First a practice run; the early train to Interlaken, an open carriage to the lake; a swim in the cobalt water of the Thünersee. Lying on one's back in the water, until forced to submerge against a dive-bombing attack from horseflies, one looks up at the icy pinnacles of the Jungfrau. The glaciers tower above us, the water temperature is seventy degrees. After lunch and some hours of sunbathing we return on the lake steamer, sometimes hugging the cliffs and woodlands of the shore, sometimes dashing across to a lake village with its vineyards and bulbous yellow church, its ruined castle and its café under the chestnut trees, while we exchange one group of sunburnt summer visitors for another, and the swans glide round the landing stage. After this preparation the real circuit begins; we invite you, reader, to Lausanne and Geneva. It's too hot to get out at Fribourg, home of the catholic aristocracy, with its convents and palaces, its admirable university publishers (L.U.F.) and its Maritainist intellectuals; too hot to leave the train till the evening, when a new balcony looks over the smooth-sliding Rhône at the Hôtel de l'Ecu. This little corner of old Geneva is almost Venetian: the river, intensely blue, looped and coiled in a swirling kaleidoscope of vanishing eddies, washes the very walls of the old down-at-heels hotel, where Stendhal, Dickens, Balzac, Ruskin, Byron, Chateaubriand and an intolerably distinguished clientèle of nineteenth-century beards haunt the corridors. Here let us evoke for a moment the vanished Geneva of Ruskin and Henry James a century ago, the small provincial city which Beckford considered had been corrupted by Voltaire from its Calvinist austerity. 'A little canton, four miles square, and which did not wish to be six miles square! A little town, composed of a cluster of water-mills, a street of penthouses, two wooden bridges, two dozen of stone houses on a little hill, and three or four perpendicular lanes up and down the hill . . . And this bird's nest of a place to be the centre of religious and social thought, and of physical beauty, to all living Europe . . . this inconceivable point of patience; Ruskin describes in *Praeterita* the old town, 'the group of officially aristocratic houses round the cathedral and college presenting the same inaccessible sort of family

dignity that they do today.' There is the inevitable visit to the jewellers (which Henry James makes such art from in the 'Pension Beaurepas') and then he returns, fascinated, to the Rhône—'But the Rhône flows like one lambent jewel; its surface is nowhere, its ethereal self is everywhere, the iridescent rush and translucent strength of it, blue to the shore and radiant to the depth.

'Fifteen feet thick, of not flowing, but flying water; not water, neither—melted glacier, rather, one should call it; the force of the ice is with it, and the wreathing of the clouds, the gladness of the sky, and the continuance of Time.

'Waves of clear sea are, indeed, lovely to watch, but they are always coming or gone, never in any taken shape to be seen for a second. But here was one mighty wave that was always itself, and every fluted swirl of it, constant as the wreathing of a shell. No washing away of the fallen foam, no pause for gathering of power, no helpless ebb of discouraged recoil; but alive through bright day and lulling night, the never-pausing plunge, and never-fading flash, and never-hushing whisper, and, while the sun was up, the ever-answering glow of unearthly aquamarine, ultramarine, violet-blue, gentian-blue, peacock-blue, river-of-paradise blue, glass of a painted window melted in the sun, and the witch of the Alps flinging the spun tresses of it forever from her snow. . . . And in the midst of all the gay glittering and eddied lingering, the noble bearing by of the midmost depth, so mighty, yet so terrorless and harmless, with its swallows skimming instead of petrels, and the dear old decrepit town as safe in the embracing sweep of it as if it were set in a brooch of sapphire.'

When I used to visit Geneva between the wars, it seemed a dull, respectable, expensive and luxurious city, most conventionally Swiss. Then it was the capital of Savoy, and through the League of Nations, of the world. Now it is cut off from both and has become a somewhat forgotten and undernourished corner, a 'dear old decrepit town' again. The life has receded from the boulevards and from the huge hotels along the lake and withdrawn itself into the older quarters. The whole place has become more French; packed with French refugees, it has become a little bit shabby and *louche*—if *loucheness* were imaginable in Switzerland—and taken on something of the atmosphere of forbidden Provence. There are 'cafés de la Marine', 'brasseries de la Navigation', the Place du Molard with its pollarded plane trees, its flower market, its kiosk and large cafés full of unobtainable French apéritifs, is like the Boulevard of Aix. Here congregate the open-shirted 'Montparnasse' of Geneva, the painters, sculptors and art critics who gravitate about Albert Skira, former editor of *Minotaure* now publisher of the only *avant-garde* art magazine in the country, the monthly *Labyrinthe*. A more academic literary group, less surrealist or preoccupied with



the visual arts, centres round Pierre Courthion and his review *Lettres*. These editors, like Skira and Courthion, all come up against the essential uncreative smallness of Switzerland, which is a country meant to publish and to propagate the arts, to produce fine books, to distribute European editions and live by exporting them, rather than to nourish its own song-birds by regularly drawing out its cheque-book. So let us thank heaven for the Place du Molard and any other still existing pockets of indigenous European culture, before we wander back to bed through the French-smelling streets and watch the moon over the water from the haunted hotel. 'I am sitting in our old family *salon* in this place, and have sat here much of the time for the last fortnight in sociable converse with family ghosts. . . . I have treated myself, as I say, to the apartments, or a portion of them, in which we spent the winter of '59-60, and in which nothing is changed save that the hotel seems to have gone down in the world a little, before the multiplication of rivals.' So wrote Henry James to his brother, with 'the shooting blue flood directly under his windows', and since October 1888, when he was at the Ecu, it has gone down, except for the food, a little bit more—bowed under, perhaps, by the ghostly impact of literary imaginations, all suffering from the terrible 'wear and tear of discrimination'. So come, reader, let's go to Lausanne—for you have guessed by now that this is to be a literary pilgrimage—where it lies on its high clean sunny ledge above the lake—embalmed in the prose of Gibbon.

'Of my situation here I have little new to say, except a very comfortable and singular truth, that my passion for my wife or mistress (Fanny Lausanne) is not palled by satiety and possession of two years. I have seen her in all seasons, and in all humours; and though she is not without faults, they are infinitely overbalanced by her good qualities. . . . In a word, my plan has most completely answered; and I solemnly protest, after two years' trial, that I have never in a single moment repented of my transmigration. The only disagreeable circumstance is the increase of a race of animals with which this country has been long infested, and who are said to come from an island in the Northern Ocean.'

There are even times when Gibbon seems to sing with the same voice as Rousseau—can you distinguish between these two pæans?

'Ce paysage unique, le plus beau dont l'œil humain fût jamais frappé; ce séjour charmant auquel je n'avais rien trouvé d'égal dans le tour du monde.'

'Je perdrais de vue cette position unique sur la terre, ce lac, ces montagnes, ces riants côteaues; ce tableau charmant, qui paroît toujours nouveau aux yeux mêmes accoutumés dès leur enfance à le voir—sur tous les pays de l'Europe j'avais choisi pour ma retraite le pays de

Vaud, et jamais je ne me suis repenti un seul instant de ce choix.' And yet Lausanne today is not what it was; it is with Lucerne the smuggest of Swiss cities, the most sport- and tourist-ridden; there is too much tennis and golf and exiled royalty, it's all too much of a *Musée Bourgeoise*; one wants, as in so many Swiss towns, to let loose some Senegalese, some French sailors or workmen, some drunken American women, some props and pillars of moral worthlessness, someone to walk on the grass or spit in the funicular. Now we leave Geneva and the Pays de Vaud, the stronghold of Gallic humanism, for the Catholic Valais, where nature is worshipped rather than man, and whose writers have an added mystical savagery in their attitude. St. Maurice, Martigny, Sion (the loveliest of all Swiss towns according to Cingria, and certainly the most romantic) and we enter the burnt-up white landscape of little African hills, like the homes of Spanish troglodytes, the rainless apricot country between Syon and Sierre. Here the cicada is found, and up each long lateral valley is some curiosity of wildness; women of Saracen descent, smugglers' headquarters, rare Arolla pines, or the archaic village-kingdom, with strange costumes and marriage laws, of Evolène. Above Sierre, pitiless in the sun, we struggle up through the vineyards and peach or walnut orchards, past the ragged tawny romanesque villages, with their untidy and sunny poverty which is so soul-refreshing, after the northern neatness, to our last literary pilgrimage, Rilke's tiny castle at Muzot.

It lies some twenty minutes above Sierre, set steeply in a less arid, but happy countryside gushing with many springs—with views of the valley, of the mountain slopes and far into the most marvellous depths of sky . . . For the Valais (why is it not included when one counts earth's loveliest places?) is an incomparable country. At first I did not understand the truth of this because I *compared* it—with the most significant things in my memory, with Spain, with Provence (with which it is, indeed, via the Rhône, related by blood), but only since I admired it for its own sake has it revealed itself in all its grandeur and at the same time, as I gradually came to see, its sweet gracefulness and its strong, passionate traditions. . . . Shrines, crucifixes at every crossroad, uplands ribbed with vineyards and in late season all curly with their foliage; fruit trees, each with its tender shade and (oh, so rightly!) single fully grown poplars dotted about, exclamation marks of space crying "Here!"

The Lötschberg is one of those tunnels which separate north and south; baroque Brigue and the Valais, the vines of the Rhône and the baked white earth with the Catholic villages, are left behind; ten minutes of darkness and we are back in the Oberland, among the heavy, broad-eaved, opulent châlets, the cows and the ski-lifts. At Spiez the lake of Thün reappears, and a branch line takes us to

Gstaad, the last lap of the journey. Gstaad is a kind of rising Kitzbühel, not too high, not too enclosed—a mountain village open to the sun, surrounded by fir-woods and fat pastures. A Mozart festival is on, directed by M. Kuriel. The whole ambience has that exquisite stimulation of a mountain resort with a great future. In the evening I would usually dine with charming and hospitable friends, who own an ancient *châlet*. To reach them I had to cross a small ravine and would often pause half-way down, surrounded by dark firs, with the grey torrent below me, while the grasshoppers subsided, their day's barracking over, and the cold night air assumed and rarefied the scents of hay and clover. In those magic twilights I came to understand what Switzerland now was—no longer a place one rushed through on the way to somewhere else, nor even a general playground whose inhabitants one ignored, but a fascinating and unexplored vital organ of European civilization. I had not explored the Tessin, nor revisited the Engadine, I had seen none of the famous baroque monuments, I had never been to Lucerne, Lugano, St. Gall, or Winterthur, but I knew this was a stronghold of civilization, a country which had new power thrust upon it, and whose federal system was an object lesson to the miserable rivalries of its battle-scarred neighbours. After the last war the Swiss refused to adopt the Vorarlberg province of Austria; it was an example which the four great powers have yet to follow. They may seem prudent, cautious and unromantic, invincibly bourgeois, but they are also admirably unambitious, unconsciously liberal, wholesomely sceptical of ideologies, and, although perhaps too attached to money, independent, wise; tolerant, humane and free.

I returned to Berne, to one last desperate act of indecision in the shops, a last farewell to the Anglophil staff of the Bellevue, and then the new through-carriage to Paris, a carriage which returned to the Jura in full Swiss cleanliness, only to become poorer and dirtier with each ham-strung league through crisis-ridden France. I had said good-bye to a radiant hospitable country, to which I hope now constantly to return, a bower of bourgeois bliss with its pre-war standards of health and courtesy, the complex land of Rousseau and Calvin where all Nature cries 'Forgive yourself!' and Man, defiant, answers 'Never!'



This number is, of necessity, no more than a partial and preliminary introduction to the rich fields of Swiss culture. We should like to express our warmest thanks to François Lachenal (*Trismegistes* of our Christmas Number) for his invaluable help and co-operation.



# THE SWISS PREDICAMENT

## I—SWITZERLAND IN EUROPE

*JEAN-R. DE SALIS*

A GERMAN historian of the nineteenth century said that republican Switzerland was a paradox in the centre of monarchic Europe. Continental Europe is now hardly monarchic—and monarchy has long ceased to be synonymous with an absolutist and anti-democratic regime—but we may ask ourselves if Switzerland does not continue to present this paradoxical case, even at the present time. The principle of nationality has, in a way, become the foundation on which modern States are built; it represents the 'legitimacy' of the twentieth century, as the dynastic principle was the legitimacy of past centuries. The last great power in which different nationalities were united under the sceptre of a great dynasty, Austria-Hungary, was dismembered a quarter of a century ago because the sovereignty of nationalities replaced that of the King-Emperor. And yet Switzerland, whose population barely exceeds four million souls, is not a national State. It is a confederation of twenty-two cantons—formerly autonomous republics, and which continue to be governed, administered and taxed according to the principle of self-government applied in the widest sense, inhabited by German-speaking, French-speaking and Italian-speaking populations. Yet no one dreams of calling these ethnical and linguistic groups 'nations', and while French- and Italian-speaking Swiss form a minority, the word 'minority' does not exist in the Swiss political vocabulary. These linguistic groups are scattered over several cantons, and four of these cantons are bilingual, that is to say, their territory contains both French- and German-speaking, or both Italian- and German-speaking populations (not to mention the Rheto-Romanches in the Grisons canton, whose idiom is used in the schools and churches).

But this is not all. Switzerland has no religious unity, and although Catholics are in the minority, their influence on national life is considerable, particularly in political matters. The religious

frontiers do not coincide with the linguistic frontiers, that is to say, there are as many specifically Protestant and specifically Catholic cantons in German Switzerland as in French Switzerland. Nor is there any unity in the country's economic and social structure. There is the agricultural Swiss, who is capable of defending his interests intelligently by the twofold means of an intensive cultivation, highly developed from the point of view of the application of scientific agronomic methods, and of a professional organization which has not disdained carrying its activities to the political plane. There is also the industrial Swiss, who has succeeded both in perfecting his technical equipment and in profiting by scientific progress. A large proportion of the population of Switzerland works for the export industry. These two activities—agriculture and industry, not to mention commerce, banking, insurance companies and the hotel industry—have created a prosperity which is in inverse ratio to the natural poverty of the country. The soil is poor, the high Alps considerably reduce its fertility, the climate is unfavourable, and as for the subsoil, it contains hardly any of the primary materials which maintain industry. It is an artificial prosperity, and a standard of living out of all proportion to the natural resources of the country, and this prosperity and standard of living are criticized all the more because Switzerland has more or less remained sheltered from the catastrophes which have convulsed and terribly impoverished the other European countries in the last thirty years. Thus, the situation is paradoxical from the economic point of view as well.

Since Switzerland provided battlefields for the armies of the French Revolution and their adversaries, the Austrians and the Russians since the Congress of Vienna, in fact, she has been miraculously spared from the scourge of foreign wars. A brief civil war in 1847 allowed the Swiss people to reform their political institutions to the pattern of modern democracy and the reinforcement of central power. Throughout, this people never nursed any illusion with regard to the precarious position which they occupy at the crossroads of the great countries of continental Europe. Her history might lead one to think that Switzerland rests in security; in reality, she 'lives dangerously'. The religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries all but sundered this half-Catholic, half-Protestant people; the national wars of

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were an all but mortal danger to a half-Germanic, half-Latin Confederation. The last war was a moral and political test for the Swiss, since the struggle in question was between good and evil. They stood aside not through indifference, but because they were not attacked. They led the life of a garrison in an invested citadel, and stood ready to defend themselves, weapon in hand. It was a very small contribution, compared with the efforts of other European countries. It was the passive resistance of an ancient republic, clinging to her mountains which had become a fortress, clinging to her own democratic convictions which she had not for one instant denied, resolved to preserve her liberty and her independence, determined to save the small plot of justice, humanity, culture and religion over which she stands guard at the heart of the Continent. She was conscious of her part in the struggle, and for her whole population the Battle of the Atlantic, the victories of the desert and of Stalingrad, the invasions of Italy and of France, were events awaited with the same anxiety and heard of with the same joy as that of the other nations of the Continent.

For their differences of language, culture, religion, political organization, and economic and social structure have never succeeded in breaking the moral unity of the Swiss people. Their public opinion is divided—like that of all democracies worthy of the name—into several political parties, into different ‘clans’. Class differences exist, as they do in all industrialized countries, and there are social problems to be solved. But it cannot be denied that, particularly in the face of the danger of fascism and national socialism, national sentiment, patriotism and civic spirit have triumphed over these divisions. Italian fascists could not understand why Swiss Italians did not feel attracted towards ‘*italianità*’ and Mussolini’s dream of Roman grandeur, and German Nazis were annoyed that the German Swiss did not succumb to the fascination of the Führer, and did not applaud his schemes for a New Order.

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The conclusion is unequivocal. Had Hitler been victorious, there would have been no Switzerland in Europe, for nothing could be more contrary to his doctrine than the ideal of tolerance, liberty, justice and human and Christian fraternity which is the



basis of Swiss national thought. Nor could anything be more shocking to the doctrine of centralized *lebensraum* than the love which the Swiss bears for his little country, and his attachment to his land of lakes and mountains. For in defence of their country, Swiss citizens have never ceased to be, despite their neutrality, a nation of soldiers, organized in military fashion, and prepared to risk war if it were imposed on them. On the other hand, Switzerland always hoped and continues to hope that she will be able to live freely in a Europe delivered from the scourges of tyranny and war, in solidarity with other free peoples, bound to her French, German, Austrian and Italian neighbours by language and culture, and on friendly terms with Great Britain and America, whose democratic and civic ideals she shares. In her civilization, Switzerland resembles the West. She is even typically occidental. In her geographical position, she is purely continental, for she has no access to the sea. On this account, her destiny is closer, for example, to that of Austria and Czechoslovakia. Belgium, Holland and Norway can depend on the ocean, can compensate their territorial limitations by the scope of maritime enterprise, and can supplement their national economy by devoting themselves to commercial navigation. Switzerland has no such resources. Her merchandise—that which she wants to export and that which she would wish to import—must cross foreign territory before reaching a sea port. Her economy, which is less ‘autarchic’ than that of any Western state, demands a policy of uninterrupted commercial exchanges with continental countries. Her existence depends on this. That is the reason for certain seeming or real contradictions in her attitude which may have surprised her European friends, and also for the lively interest which the Swiss people, their political leaders and their economic associations take in questions of the organization of the peace.

Switzerland, in the midst of the most terrible European catastrophes, has tried to ensure the equilibrium of her national life amidst the general instability. Her foreign policy seems simple, but is in reality difficult to conduct, and is exposed to the danger of being misinterpreted by those very nations which are closest to us in thought and sentiment. A kind of European microcosm, Switzerland has never sought to detach herself from Europe, nor to assume a policy of ‘isolationism’. She has become

even more minute since European policy has become world-embracing. In spite of these difficulties, she has faith in her destiny and faith in Europe. She means to make her contribution to the common work of reconstruction, reorganization and reconciliation. For her only chance, and the only chance of Europe, too, lies in the organization and consolidation of a durable peace.

[*Translated by* NATALIA GALITZINE]

## II—THE REPUBLIC OF THE LITTLE MAN

### HANS SCHMIDT

FEDERAL Counsellor Eduard von Steiger, one of the seven supreme law-givers of Switzerland, once described his country as 'The Republic of the Little Man'. And it is no mere accident that this expression should have come from the lips of that very man who, as head of the Department of Justice and Police, has been responsible during the war years for a policy running directly counter to the democratic outlook and traditions of the Swiss people. His utterance is pure demagoguery.

Undoubtedly the Swiss like to think of themselves as a small nation of modest, industrious people with no imperialistic aspirations; and on the whole this is still true enough. But these worthy people do not wish to see—or rather good care is taken to prevent them seeing—the changes that have taken place.

Time was when Switzerland passed for the land of freedom and democracy. In the nineteenth century it was looked up to by all progressive people on account of its democratic structure and its courageous attitude on rights of sanctuary. Its praises were then sung as the birthplace of William Tell. But in the Switzerland of today such sentiments live on only in the hearts of the little men and the orations of the Federal Counsellors. It is significant that every foreigner thinks first and foremost of present-day Switzerland as the centre of a tourist industry which has little or nothing to do with the spirit of William Tell.

Modern Switzerland has ceased to be the home of the simple Alpine dwellers living among their flocks. Today only 22% of

the population lives by agriculture; over 60% of the population has moved into the smaller or larger towns. Next to Great Britain and Belgium, Switzerland is now one of the most highly industrialized countries in Europe, and a large part of its industry depends on export. Some 400,000 out of a total of 2,000,000 workers in industry are directly or indirectly employed in connection with export. And during the course of its transformation into an industrial State, the land of the cowherds has become the perfect stronghold of the capitalists. During the critical period from 1925 to 1929 Switzerland converted 18% of her national income—which is about 10 milliard Swiss francs yearly—into capital, whereas during the same period Great Britain was only able to convert about 8%. In 1940 the foreign investments of Swiss capital were estimated at about 10 milliard Swiss francs—5 milliards of which were in America alone—that is to say a larger total than that of any other European country, with the exception of Great Britain.

Just these few figures suffice to give a different picture of the republic of the little man from that which Herr von Steiger and his friends would have us see. But perhaps in one sense the land of William Tell is a model, perhaps care has been taken to see that these riches are at least justly distributed? The following comparison of the distribution of the national income is the best answer to such a question:

	<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>Gt. Britain</i>
Wage-earners	50%	60%
Independents (agriculture, trade and industry, free professions)	22%	12%
Interest on capital	28%	28%
	<hr/> 100%.	<hr/> 100%

The percentage of unearned income is therefore exactly the same as in Great Britain. But how does the ordinary man live? In 1942 the taxable income of 75% of the wage-earners was less than 3,000 Swiss francs per head per year. The number that have to be assisted with Poor Relief is therefore always on the increase. For example, in the rich Canton of Zürich (in which there are 511 millionaires) the number is 60,000 persons, that is to say one in every ten inhabitants.



We get the same picture if we study the distribution of the national wealth. The figures of the taxation register show that 85% of the Swiss nation only owns 15% of the national wealth, whereas the remaining 85% is in the hands of only 15% of the total population. The lion's share is held by some 1,500 millionaires and multi-millionaires, who are well known to the taxation authorities. In reality there should be more of them—say 4,000. As a result of a general taxation amnesty passed in 1945 hidden capital to the value of an additional 5 milliard Swiss francs was brought to light.

There is therefore not an iota of difference between Herr von Steiger's 'Republic of the Little Man' and any other ultra-capitalistic State where the riches concentrated in a few hands are the key to the real economic and political power.

Now what are the political effects of this situation? The war has enormously strengthened the ascendancy of wealth of the great capitalist. Whereas the dividends of the big concerns have increased by anything from 2% to 15%, the basic wage of the masses has fallen by anything from 7% to 25%. Unlike what happened during the First World War, successful efforts have admittedly been made to control the prices of consumer goods and to indemnify the soldiers for loss during their periods of absence on military service through a Wage Compensation Fund. Furthermore, the end of this war has brought, contrary to all expectations, not unemployment but a continuation of full employment.

Therefore, for the moment there is no great swing to the Left among the mass of the Swiss people as there was at the end of the First World War. But this does not mean that it acquiesces in the picture of the Ideal Republic of the Little Man and allows itself to be deceived about the realities of the situation. On the one hand the workman cannot overlook the fact that, despite the favourable economic situation, his basic wage has fallen well below pre-war level and that he can only secure increased purchasing power by fighting for it. The attitude of the big capitalists has stiffened, and they show no inclination to sacrifice their fat wartime profits for higher wages and social reforms. Quite the contrary; in expectation of still keener international economic competition they are attempting to lower the standard of life of the Swiss worker. On the other hand the big Swiss capitalists indulged in a policy of bowing to Axis demands, a policy which was anything but

popular with the democratically minded masses and which has done much to discredit in their eyes both the government and the parliament elected in 1943.

The victory of the democracies over Fascism has also released a lot of steam in Switzerland. The 'historical' parties, which have to answer for the direction of the nation's affairs during the war years, are all passing through a critical period. The Social-Democrats are faced with the problem of whether to continue their collaboration with the capitalist parties or adopt an active socialist policy. The cause of their doubts is the Workers' Party, founded in 1944. After a year and a half's existence the Workers' Party, which was formed from the ranks of the Swiss Communist Party (declared illegal during the war) with the addition of a few well-known renegades from the Social-Democratic Party, reinforced by a large and hitherto politically inactive mass, can claim over 20,000 members. (The 'official' membership of the Social-Democratic Party is about 42,000.) This party has experienced political leaders in its President, Léon Nicole, who, when he left the Social-Democratic Party, took the great majority of the Geneva trade unionists with him, and its Secretary Karl Hofmaier, who was for many years the head of the Swiss Communist Party. On the intellectual side it can count on the support of Professor Artur Baumgarten of Basle University, and the writer Hans Mühlestein.

The newly founded Workers' Party has already met with success in its campaign for improving the economic situation of the great masses of the people. In more than one Cantonal election (Geneva, Zürich, Basle, Lausanne) it has emerged as proportionately the strongest party. But it does not confine itself to the field of internal politics. From its very inception it has exposed those tendencies in our foreign policy which are hostile to the democracies and which threaten to make of Switzerland a sort of safe haven for international reactionaries, in particular our increasing lack of confidence in the democracies and our hostility towards the Soviet Union. So far it is the only political party which has demanded the end of Swiss neutrality, on the grounds that it has lost its former significance and can only lead to the political isolation of Switzerland.

The success of the Workers' Party is significant in so far as it proves that large numbers of Swiss can be won over to support an

anti-capitalist and—in the true sense of the word—democratic policy. It also shows that, even in this country which has escaped the war, there are forces astir ready to break with the past and turn Switzerland again into a progressive democratic State.

[*Translated by* DOUGLAS COOPER]

### III—THE CULTURAL POSITION OF GERMAN SWITZERLAND

DR. KARL GEORG SCHMID

KARL GEORG SCHMID, who was born in 1907, is one of the most outstanding literary figures in Switzerland today. During his periods of military service from 1939 to 1945 he was a Staff Officer and was for a time on a Divisional Staff. In 1944 he was appointed Professor of German Literature and Philology at the Zürich Polytechnic.

The following article is a summary of his inaugural academic speech, delivered in October 1944. Subsequent events in Europe have called for certain emendations of detail. The speech was published in full at the beginning of 1945 by the Polygraphischer Verlag of Zürich in the series of political and cultural documents which they edit for the Polytechnic.

THE formation of the Swiss Republic is not based on any objective motivating force. We are bound together neither by race nor language. As spiritual culture cannot be separated from language, and as we belong to different linguistic groups, there is more than one cultural boundary which runs through the middle of our country. It is as hopeless to base an explanation of our union on such principles as blood-ties or a common origin, as it is to try and discover a common and representative Swiss culture which can be unreservedly proclaimed as a specific national attribute.

Our distinguishing feature is not our common culture but our will to independence—it is backed by a long common history—and the ideas of confederacy and justice, which are the roots of our political life. By option, and by deliberately repeated ratification of the basic ideas of Confederacy, we Swiss do not belong to any particular linguistic community or race. Therefore we demand from every Swiss intellectual not only passive recognition of his national allegiance, but also spontaneous acquiescence in the basic principles of our State. Those

Swiss whose creative cultural contribution has been greatest, have all lived up to this expectation. Zwingli, Nicolas Manuel, Albrecht von Haller, Pestalozzi, Gotthelf, Keller, Meyer, Spitteler, Jakob Burckhardt and the rest, all rose above mere acceptance of their nationality as some undefined feeling and lived up to the spirit of our Constitution. They deliberately adopted the ideas of the Confederation as their own, fought for them, proclaimed them and used them to creative ends.

But it is a mistake to overestimate this act of political affirmation and to believe either that the intellectual heritage and scale of values of the cultured Swiss can be identified with his civic creed and his political ethics, or that spiritually he has nothing outside of his acceptance of Swiss democracy. There are times when the political creed is of peculiar importance, because it provides him with the strength necessary to take a personal decision touching his attitude as a citizen. We have been passing through a time like this since 1940. The exigencies of the period demanded that the problem of the individual should be linked to the problem of his attitude, his sentiments, his proof of good will; and during this period more than one plain burgess was struck off the civic register (in company with others) despite his Swiss nationality, because of his associates.

We had, and have, the right to judge a man by his sentiments; it is, therefore, wrong to identify a political outlook with a spiritual heritage. If the descriptive adjective 'Swiss' is dropped, the true character of Zwingli, Pestalozzi, Keller and the rest, is no longer defined; for they all belong also to another—the German—tradition, just as Vinet, Amiel, Ramuz, etc., cannot be separated from the French tradition.

Herein lies the essence, the structural formula, which always has been the key to the cultural position of the Swiss intellectuals. They are the products of a sort of double citizenship. As a member of a linguistic community whose boundaries greatly overlap our frontiers, they have responsibilities to the German, French or Italian cultural domains. But as members of the Confederation, they have to go further and be at the same time representative of that particular co-operative national culture by which their social and political scale of values is determined.

This two-fold citizenship brings about a dual tension; for it is not only a question of double attachment, but also of a two-way



pull. The pull of linguistic affinity is towards the spiritual centres of attraction in the linguistic area, with their corresponding zones of culture. It is, therefore, centrifugal; for these centres are generally located beyond the frontiers of Switzerland. (It is, of course, a mistake to identify these centres of attraction with the capitals of the contiguous countries. The centre of attraction in Germany is not, as far as we are concerned, Berlin.) On the other hand, the pull of natural allegiance is centripetal and is towards the federal idea. The Swiss is too federally conscious to be capable of accepting heedlessly and uncritically the cultural values of the linguistic family to which he belongs. The fact that he lives on the periphery of certain linguistic and cultural areas makes it easier for him to keep an open mind and foreordains him to understand quite different cultures. The cultural awareness which binds him to an area of linguistic affinity, keeps his mind open and preserves him from the dangers of becoming either a provincial or (under the strain of political ascendancy) a nationalistic introvert.

The moral obligation to the Confederation may be strong—and in a year like 1940 it was the deciding factor—but the spiritual obligation to the area of linguistic and cultural affinity is equally so. Without the latter we would be exposed to the danger of dying from Pharisaism. Without the former the State itself would be in danger, and our civilization and culture must succumb to internationalism. Enter the ghost of cultural relativity. The spiritual and political fate of our country and its cultural force depend on an equal balance of strength and vitality being maintained between those spiritual forces which bind us to the centre and those which tend to break out—and *vice versa*.

Hence Swiss culture has a character which reflects the dual citizenship of the individual. This is the structural formula with which history has presented us and which we must accept once and for all as our basis. It is ridiculous to talk of a 'Swiss culture' which can be compared to the German, the French or the Italian. Swiss culture is both more and less. But it is equally ridiculous to deny the existence of a Swiss culture, and to pretend that a Federation, within a loose form of sovereign State, of provinces belonging to three different cultural domains can occur without producing a spiritual interaction. Federation implies (and means putting into practice) certain very definite spiritual

concepts, particularly in the fields of politics, sociology and ethics; and in this sense (which differs from Burckhardt's conception of a culturally unconcerned 'State authority') the whole spiritual life of the Swiss is distinctively coloured.

Switzerland's cultural character—and this follows logically from the foregoing—is inevitably and, in the highest degree, federal. And I do not mean simply in the sense of the federation of a number of Cantons, which is merely the outward and political reflection of a profounder aspiration. It is federal in the sense that Federation means the interaction of spiritual impulses which originate from different sources, different worlds even. And it is the mutually regenerating interchange of these impulses within an ethical system which bears their stamp that we call the Swiss Confederacy.

The fact that Switzerland's normal cultural position can be described thus merely serves to emphasize the abnormal state which has existed for the last twelve years. Switzerland's cultural federation on the highest plane has been in far more danger than at the end of the First World War. The cultural balance has been upset. And for the moment there appear to be only two ways open, culturally as well as politically: unequivocal acceptance of the victorious powers, of their scale of values and of their ideology, or the equally dangerous cultivation of the myth of spiritual autarchy.

In 1933, and even more so after the outbreak of war in 1939, we were faced with the similar choice of joining 'the German revolution'. A country with the cultural character of Switzerland could not help, in view of similar experiences in the past, being deeply implicated; more especially since, given a partially common language, a revaluation of all values, that is to say also the revision of a whole vocabulary, cannot fail to make its influence immediately and automatically felt inside our territory. The intelligent man soon became aware that Germany had succumbed to a spiritual outlook and a scale of values whose acceptance by the German-speaking or other parts of Switzerland would quite certainly lead to the break-up of the Confederacy. He was, moreover, aware that a very clever attempt was being made to modify and colour the spiritual affinity that exists between German-speaking Switzerland and the German mother-culture, in such a way that, from one day to the next, political consequences could follow. There was a danger that language,

always the essence of our spiritual loyalty, would be suddenly transformed into a ready-made State Paper. Nor could this danger be overcome simply by direct opposition. This would not have been popular in all parts of the country. For there were many people whose ideas were not at all clear. At the very moment when our whole political existence was at stake, we were split on a question of cultural allegiance. Those who stood out against the German danger were accused of selling our country to Russia or the powers of Western Europe. Admittedly, the instincts of the great mass of the people were on the whole sound. Those who kept a clear head knew that what mattered were political sentiments and nothing else, that the federal idea had to be upheld on every plane—even at the risk of being culturally isolated for a period.

And that is what did happen (and is still happening) to us, at least in many respects. The Nazis aimed at taking full possession of German culture. In practice, the effect on us of the doctrine of total warfare was such that we could only remain true to ourselves by saying 'No' to the whole of German culture in its contemporary ideologically twisted form. We were left with the German culture of former days, with history. The remoulding of this which was undertaken by the Nazis—with regard to the period of German Classicism or the Age of Enlightenment, for example—will go down to history as a travesty. We made an attempt to keep alive—while not forgetting our affinity—a different conception of German cultural history. By sheer necessity German-speaking Switzerland was driven into a phase of cultural retrenchment.

When the fundamental military balance of power had been completely upset in the summer of 1940, and our country was open to attack from all sides at once, we constructed a military fortress, a hide-out, which was known as 'The Redoubt'. The spirit behind it was that of resistance at all costs, but even its designers had no illusions about the outcome of 'The Battle for the Redoubt'. There was no future in 'The Redoubt' because we had no resources, no means of livelihood. And yet the military decision to construct a redoubt was approved by everyone. It had a symbolical significance because our history and traditions do not permit of capitulation without resistance. The decision in favour of a redoubt was a decision to defend our moral rather than our physical existence.

When, in the summer of 1940, we had to choose between compromise and keeping faith, 'The Redoubt' was a visible sign whose inspiration we all felt. Militarily and economically we were entirely dependent on ourselves. There were two principles which governed our actions then: to defend our possessions, and to increase the products of our own soil, to intensify what was peculiarly our own. The same principles applied also to our cultural life. Hitherto it had seemed that Switzerland could not exist without a great volume of imports and exports, that militarily her doom was sealed unless she had a powerful ally, and that the Swiss—particularly the German-Swiss—must stand or fall with the continued existence of their dual cultural citizenship. Now things had to change. National-Socialist Germany no longer had anything of cultural value for us. That is a fact. There remained the Germany of the history books. But one should not overestimate the strength of history's shaping of a nation's spirit in its current spiritual life, particularly not in art. It is an irrefutable fact that the great periods in Swiss cultural history have been those in which Switzerland and the Swiss were not holding converse with the dead, but enjoying a lively intercourse with their neighbours. A sort of Germany lived on through the refugees. But speaking objectively, and without wishing to be derogatory, it must here be admitted that they were not in a position either to represent or to perform the same service that a living Germany would have meant for Switzerland and for every one of us.

Thus, spiritually as well as materially, defence and intensification of what was ours were the weapons (and not in name only) with which German-speaking Switzerland, the element hardest hit, fought this cultural calamity. It was the only possible way. Much has occurred during this period of autarchy which has lasting value. During these years we have come to know more about our own country and its spiritual heritage than if it had not happened. It was the best thing we could do, to make a Swiss virtue out of German necessity. But now we must grasp the tiller of truth. It is entirely in our interest to prevent the perpetuation of present circumstances. It should not be our hope that, with the political collapse of Germany in 1945, German cultural life will perish. Our own future demands that once again we will clearly differentiate between National-Socialist



Germany and Germany as the birthplace of all those forces and possibilities which it has given to the world during the last few centuries. Since 1933 we have had to make this differentiation as a defence against the political power of Nazi Germany: today it must be made for the sake of the eternal contribution of the German spirit. It is the duty of those who, during the last few years, never for a moment wavered in their allegiance to the State, to speak their minds openly now on the cultural position. However, we hope that there will be sympathy with our position and that the outside world will understand that our present attitude is not germanophil in the sense of a disreputable political leaning but that it is the only possible one for the sake of German-speaking Switzerland. For we are well aware that it would never have become what it is without the Germany of the past.

Now that the political danger of Germany has disappeared we must be mindful of our cultural affinity. This is essential. Nor must we be misunderstood in this: it is not simply a question of setting up the 'Nathan' of one German—Lessing—in mitigation of that other German, Himmler. Not at all. It was a German who said 'The history of the world is the judgement of mankind', and I do not think that we have either inwardly any qualifications or outwardly the possibility of assisting this judgement or of casting ourselves on its mercy. It is not Germany which is immediately at stake but ourselves.

For many people today it is this German spirit which is in the dock. This we must realize, and also the fact that it is one of the fundamentals of our existence. Only a very small quantity of those things of which we talk so freely when we indulge our pride in the richness and possibilities of German-Swiss culture would ever have existed without Germany, German spiritual life, German music, philosophy, poetry and science. We talk of Keller, Meyer, Gotthelf, Jakob Burckhardt and Spitteler—to mention only a few names from the last hundred years—but they would never have been great if they had denied their debt to German culture.

A total denial of the German spirit implies also a denial of one of the most important elements in everything of value produced by German-speaking Switzerland. The disappearance of the German spirit would not only be a blow to German-speaking Switzerland; indirectly it would threaten the whole internal

structure of Swiss culture, for it would upset the balance of our cultural federation.

The time has come when we may once more start to free ourselves from our emotionally determined attitude to the Germans. The period of 'The Redoubt', when resistance was the only law, is now past. Yesterday's spirit of resistance must not be allowed to develop into tomorrow's spirit of self-complacency. Today we are in a position to strike the balance after five or ten years of spiritual autarchy. Despite the pleasure and the lasting value, I do not think it should be our wish to go on living spiritually on ourselves. The responsibility falls to us, and the tools are in our hands, to prove once more what has so often been proved by Germans before: that an obligation to German culture is not incompatible with being a European, that in terms of humanity and of Europe the finest and the rarest thoughts can be expressed in the German language as well as in any other. The responsibility falls to us—and it is the duty of the next generation—to prove to the world that the mere fact of speaking German is no reason for us to feel ashamed before anyone, any more than the French-Swiss are ashamed of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew or the Ticinese of the Abyssinian War.

We must realize that if 'all that is German' is to be judged today in the East and in the West alike, then we are to some degree implicated. This very fact demands that we face facts in all seriousness. We speak a language which it was dangerous to be heard speaking in the streets of nine-tenths of the earth's surface because it was the language of 'the Myth of the Twentieth Century'. Yet it is also the language of Wolfram von Eschenbach, of Luther and Dürer, of Mozart, Schiller and Kant. It is also the language of Zwingli and Pestalozzi, of Meyer and Jakob Burckhardt, of Gottfried Keller and Spitteler. It is the language in which *Nathan* was written as well as *Iphigenia*, and it is the language which bursts forth in the last movement of the Ninth Symphony. The language of this other, and, as we believe, the true Germany is also the language of a large section of the best of our population. Mine is but a modest contribution to the struggle for that spiritual openness which has always been justly praised as constituting the greatness of German-Swiss poetry and of the cultural life of Switzerland.

[Translated by DOUGLAS COOPER]

## IV—KARL BARTH AND GERMANY

### *ERNEST VON SCHENCK*

NOWHERE, perhaps, is Protestantism brought more closely face to face with the basic problems of our time than in the writings of Karl Barth, a theologian from Basle. He quickly acquired a far-reaching authority as a theologian by his mastery of dialectics and dogma. He put an end to liberal theology. In his earliest theological writings a paradox was apparent: doctrinally, he went back to a rigid conservatism, proclaiming anew the absolute sanctity of the Scriptures and hailing the first commentators (especially those of the Reformation) as the restorers of the true doctrine; politically he was a socialist. Before Barth those socialists who had attempted to bridge the gulf between Marxian dialectics and Christianity had been mostly 'left-wing' theologians, that is to say they had belonged to the liberal school of theology. Barth went a step further and attacked the 'bourgeois' tendency at its spiritual roots, that is to say on the religious plane where it affected a cultural and ethical optimism.

Side by side with this purely 'worldly' anti-liberal 'pessimism', Barth's theological outlook was coloured by a disparaging attitude to mankind. This mood was very characteristic of the period following the end of the First World War, and a Christian parallel is suggested by the anti-humanistic attitude adopted by the great reformers like Luther and Calvin (and to a lesser degree Zwingli). We must look here for the roots of that authoritarianism which was so marked in Barth's ecclesiastical policy; on the temporal plane this authoritarian pessimism produced Fascism.

The worldly authoritarian claims of the State were fully realized in the National-Socialist State, which received its power neither 'by the Grace of God', nor from the hand of man, but only by the usurpation of sovereignty. Man no longer counted; in principle the human structure of society was abolished when the nation was deprived of the established rule of law and placed at the mercy of an arbitrary and cruel struggle for power. It is not possible to have more than one absolute lord. Therefore, of necessity, God ultimately had to be got rid of in Germany. Once again it all depended on whether there would be any witnesses to the sovereignty of Christ who felt themselves inwardly superior

to the worldly power. There were Christians in Germany who fought Hitler, amongst them some Protestants. In these circles the influence of Barth's teaching was most important.

Owing to their Lutheran origin, the German Protestant Churches were State churches (*cuius regio, eius religio*). They accepted as a matter of course the idea of service to and protection of the State. The first beginnings of the break-up of this relationship appeared in liberal theological thought. But for the most part it was just this liberal element in the Church which was spiritually no match for the ideological onslaught of National-Socialism. The theological 'right-wing', on the other hand, was also on the whole politically 'right-wing'. Pastor Niemöller, a former German officer, one of the leaders of the right-wing before 1933 and a member of the Nazi Party, was a typical example. Now under the particular influence of Karl Barth it was the theological right-wing which produced the 'Confessional Church' (*Bekennniskirche*), a small group of German Protestants who took up the fight against the totalitarian claims of the Nazis on the purely ecclesiastical plane.

When the Battle of the Churches was at its height Karl Barth returned to Switzerland. He did not face martyrdom at the hands of the Nazis, and there are Germans who reproach him for this today. They overlook the fact that he is Swiss. In his case nationality was decisive, for through it he was not only absolved from those political disabilities which tended to cripple his German fellow-Christians in their struggle against Hitler, but more especially was enabled to make common cause politically with the important democratic forces of anti-Nazi opposition represented by the majority of the Swiss people. This meant that he was better placed than anyone to exhort the Swiss to resist Nazism and also to warn the rest of the world against the advance of the Nazi Anti-Christ. Undaunted, he pursued this course with unflinching spiritual logic. Then, after the collapse of the Third Reich, his was the first voice raised to exhort all Christians of the world to stand by the Germans in their hour of need (physical as well as spiritual), to help them to bear their burden of war guilt and share in its expiation. This, out of the consciousness that, though the German guilt is clear and incontestable, it is but an aspect of universal guilt and of the crisis through which humanity is passing.

Today, Karl Barth is again in the midst of all the German



controversies. The future of the Reformation is at stake. Politically he is firmly on the side of the 'left-wing', whose responsibility it is to rebuild Germany and Europe out of the ruins that remain after the disappearance of the reactionary feudal-bourgeois order. Now, there are political consequences which follow from the doctrine of universal solidarity, which is the Christian doctrine, and these Barth does not hesitate to draw with an unbiased mind. Yet he remains the man of the Confessional Church who refuses to gloss over ethically the paradoxes of Christian doctrine. This spiritual lead is of the greatest importance, not only for Germany, and the conflict has already flared up violently everywhere.

If, under Barth's influence, German Protestantism has the strength to effect a volte-face and carry through a drastic revision of the Reformation, it will be an epoch-making event. Karl Barth is Swiss and a democrat. During the years of the battle against the Third Reich, the radical, the socialist elements of democracy—who alone can win the peace after this Second World War—have been theologically vindicated by him. This was only possible because of his double role, on the one hand actively participating in events in Germany, on the other keeping his distance, so that with all the appearance of divine revelation he was able to exercise a spiritual influence over the course of events. If Germany becomes a democracy—and unless this happens, how can democracy claim a victory for itself?—it will be seen that one of the first steps towards it was taken by Karl Barth when he laid the theological foundations for a new political society.

The Nazis hoped to disparage Karl Barth as a Christian by calling him a 'political' theologian. It is the greatest feather in his cap. For he took up politics to fight for a just world order and not to make the Church into a political force. What he has done he did to win power for man—for mankind, for all men, for 'the little man'—to combat all usurpers of sovereignty whoever they may be, whether heads of States or business magnates. In the light of the message revealed to him by the gospels, he has discovered a new political humanism, the working of which, as a form of world order, need only be justified before God and in Christ.

[Translated by DOUGLAS COOPER]

In 1945 a volume of pamphlets, speeches and articles by Karl Barth was published under the title of *Eine Schweizer Stimme* (A Swiss Voice) 1938-1945.

# THE VAUDOIS SCHOOL

## PIERRE-LOUIS MATTHEY

### BIOGRAPHY

IN 1914, Pierre-Louis Matthey published *Seize-à-Vingt*, poems of adolescence, strange and harsh, full of fury and outrageous confessions, interspersed with pools of calm music in which singular poetic visions are mirrored. This date is important: never before had a French-Swiss poet dared to publish such self-revelation.

Then followed *Semaines de Passion*, then *Même sang*, fragments of a long elegy on the death of a friend, containing some most beautiful French verse.

After long years of silence, broken only by an admirable translation of 'The Tempest', various reviews published some of his poems, obscure, but very finished in form, crowned in 1941 by the great *Alcyonée à Pallène*, whose spirit, derived from those shadows of the being where body and soul alternately unite and separate, is canalized into verses of compact and perfect alexandrines.

It is difficult to evoke the atmosphere of Matthey's poetry. His poems actually lead us to the verge of self-forgetfulness, and capture those ambiguous yet vivid visions, those strangely coloured gleams, those voices of fallen angels, those sharp flames, those obscure carnal whirlpools which the tumults of passion excite, as it were, outside our true selves. Yet the poet seldom lacks the music with which to suggest and evoke this world—a skilful music, which seems to make audible at the same time the most strident and the most distant timbre of the words.

GEORGES NICOLE

## PIERRE-LOUIS MATTHEY

### REPOS DOMINICAL

'Je fais du bruit dans l'herbe, et les morts sont contents.'

VICTOR HUGO: *Les Rayons et les Ombres*

Dimanche presque éteint priait vers quelque pluie.  
Quels feux tisonnaient-ils ces chemins parallèles  
L'un qui vouûté soubresautait perdait des tuiles  
L'autre nu sachant tout du jour et de la nuit:

J'errais sous le tunnel troué d'oiseaux d'horloge.  
Une mère et des sœurs capeline battant  
Arpentaient sécateurs çà et là becquetant  
Le chemin sans rideaux couleur de chambre haute.

La pelouse entre nous fumait de molles bagues.  
Fustigeait les rebords de verre de sa source.  
Excédée elle clapotait autour de bêtes.  
Noyait désenchantée un éclat de grillon.

Saugrenue elle reflétait le mal des harpes!  
Le miel vif des sabots qui gouttent d'un pelage!  
Jusqu'aux écarts vermiculés des libellules  
De la foudre qui gratte en rêvant des gâchettes!

Elle allait cucillant les cerceaux rouillés des pentes  
Vers les éclairs de faux des truites en maraude!  
Vers les cascades aux tiroirs bondés d'anguilles!  
Elle si fraîche! Elle allait vers la mer si chaude.

Qu'un coup de vent superposant ses prophéties  
Fasse enfoncer soudain l'orphelinat des sites!  
Lâchant le jeune phare aux tournoyantes haches  
Elle entrait dans la turbulence de sa vogue!

Moire! Moire absorbant la moelle des cyclones  
Evirant d'une aspiration tout midi  
Tandis que des rayons l'automne entier de pointes  
Bascule en les ombrages d'aube et disparaît!

Vert pacage où ne tirent plus les tours gothiques  
Des salves dont le vin bégaye avec l'encens!  
Zone où les canons de soleil des télescopes  
Ne soufflent que le cercle absolu de l'absence!

Et des corps où jamais nul ne mira le sien  
De dragons écailleux exsudant la rosée  
Immortels par un truc profane de maintien  
Y glacent Dieu pas mal cassé sur Sa pensée.

...Les couleuvres filaient des feux de feuilles mortes  
Du crépuscule que l'aveugle brusque écoute...  
Le chèvrefeuille débouchait ses clarinettes...  
Le manoir de stuc offrait des stupeurs de barque.

L'hirondelle écornait les pailles d'Italie.  
Le groupe aux bras de grès s'effrita sous la pluie.  
—Pleurai-je à vous ouïr, ô dames d'élégie,  
En grande peur de moi gémir:

J'ai peur pour lui...?

# GUSTAVE ROUD

## BIOGRAPHY

By birth a peasant, who has always lived at his parents' farm, very close to his own land, bound to each tree, each bird, each flower of this land by a pure, Franciscan sense of fraternity, Gustave Roud has nevertheless observed in nature itself the most solemn indications of eternity, and has learnt at the heart of that which he loves the solitude and the nostalgia of a paradise in which man and the universe incessantly echo each other. All his poetry extols and depicts both the profound landscapes of this earth, so similar to images of a possible paradise, the peasants wedded to the earth, and solitary man who sorrowfully accepts his solitude, aspirations, and the blazing visions of a spiritual universe, whose fleshly eyes have been opened together with those of the soul.

It is an essentially truthful poetry, highly noble in tone, and in which an art sprung from the great classic prose is mingled with the tender inflexions of Schubert's *lieder* and that strain of poetic certitude which makes Roud comparable to Hölderlin and Novalis.

It was in 1927 (the poet was thirty years old) that Roud's first work appeared, that great tragic monologue *Adieu*, in which the poet, engulfed by the vast solitude of night, murmurs, as to a human being, his farewell to the beloved world. Then came *Feuillet*s, brief, penetrating observations; the *Traité de la marche en pleine*; the *Essai pour un paradis*; the lovely poems *Pour un moissonneur*, visions of eternal plenitude; and finally, the recent *Air de la solitude*, in which the poet sets down, as if from day to day, his profound conversations with the seasons.

Gustave Roud has also translated, admirably, the poems of Hölderlin and the 'Disciples at Sais' of Novalis.

GEORGES NICOLE

## GUSTAVE ROUD

### BAIN D'UN FAUCHEUR<sup>1</sup>

Un dimanche sans faux comblé de cloches pures  
Ouvre à ton corps brûlé la gorge de fraîcheur  
Fumante, fleuve d'air aux mouvantes verdure  
Où tu descends, battu de branches et d'odeurs.

Ce tumulte de lait dans la pierre profonde  
De quel bouillonnement va-t-il enfin briser  
L'âpre bond de ta chair ravie au linge immonde  
Vers une étreinte d'eau plus dure qu'un baiser!

<sup>1</sup> Paru dans *Pour un moissonneur*, Éditions Aujourd'hui 1941.



Là-haut sous le soleil, au flanc des franges d'ombre,  
Lèvres béantes, lourds de ton noir alcool,  
Sommeil! les moissonneurs te livrent leurs bras sombres  
Et gisent à jamais crucifiés au sol.

Paix à ce lent troupeau de forces dénouées!  
Qu'il goûte son repos sous l'aile des vergers!  
Mais la dérision de ces faces trouées,  
Cet amoncellement de brebis sans berger,

Cette acceptation d'esclaves, tu les nies,  
O corps agenouillé sur le sable de sel  
Dans le frémissement des feuilles infinies  
Et les tonnants éclats du fleuve temporel!

Quel suspens, quelle attente attisaient ta venue!  
Quel chœur mélodieux de l'azur et des eaux  
Jette comme une offrande à ton épaule nue  
Des averses de ciel, des orages d'oiseaux,

Des cris de fleurs, des éclairs d'écume, et ce baume  
Que les troncs déchirés pleurent dans la forêt!  
Délivre ta chair fauve au cœur de ton royaume!  
Laisse adorer ton sang tout un peuple secret!

Et quand tu surgiras de ces noces étranges  
Où la vague devient l'épouse et le tombeau,  
Donne au soleil du soir sa suprême vendange!  
Qu'il boive ce regard! Qu'il brûle cette peau

Pacifiée, ô frère, et pose à ta poitrine,  
Comme un oiseau perdu pris au miel du crin d'or,  
Comme un oiseau jailli du piège des collines,  
Ce tendre bras de feu qui désarme la mort.

# INTRODUCTION TO C.-F. RAMUZ AND EDMOND GILLIARD LOUIS JUNOD

IF we have to indicate the two most characteristic living representatives of French-Swiss literature, we would not hesitate to name Ramuz and Edmond Gilliard, both from the Vaud. Their lives, like their work, form two almost symmetrically opposite and complementary pictures. They have in common the voluntary, intense and triumphant effort to find a style which is their own personal style, giving rise to imitations, and at the same time inimitable.

Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz was born in Lausanne on 24 September 1878, and has written of his childhood and youth at Lausanne and at Chesaux nearby in *Découverte du monde*. His whole career, his whole life even, may be contained in this one word: *writing*. The external events of this existence count for little: his literary studies at the Lausanne University, the twelve years spent in Paris, where, lonely and homesick, he fully realized his profound ties to his native land and his sense of vocation, finally his return to Switzerland, where he has lived since, in the immediate vicinity of Lausanne. The only thing that counts is this vocation, of extolling this corner of the earth, of expressing its poetry for the first time: a land which stretches from the vineyards by Lake Lemane to the Valais mountains up the Rhône, that Rhône which is the link between this country and the Latin Midi.

His works, of which novels comprise the greater part, today form an impressive series; nothing in them is mediocre, not even the first volumes, which are not the works of a beginner. *Aline*, the very simple story of a country girl, made a mother and then abandoned, already presages all Ramuz' mature works; *Les circonstances de la vie* is a realistic, harsh novel, a useful experience, carried to its conclusion, and to which the author will not return; with *Jean-Luc persécuté*, Ramuz approaches the mountains for the first time; and in *Aimé Pache: peintre vaudois*, we are given a transposed personal autobiography. Then, having completed the cycle of his experiences, Ramuz began the series of his great novels with the *Vie de Samuel Belet*.

For Ramuz, the mountain ceases to be a background, and becomes an element bound to the action of the narrative, when it is not an actual protagonist in the action, as in *La grande peur dans la montagne*. The vineyard country also becomes the actual subject of a novel, in *Passage du poète*. The poet's fantasy, nourished by a sort of mystical vision of the world, causes him to take for his characters those whose environment brings them into the most intimate contact with the earth, and to transfigure them to some extent.

To these novels we must add several poems, and essays, philosophical and moral, political and æsthetic, like *Taille de l'homme*; *Questions*; *Besoin de grandeur*; and finally his *Journal*, which is a stirring testimony of long years of search and effort to attain 'authenticity' and 'identity'.

Its style makes Ramuz' work unique and inimitable. Avoiding local colour, the easy effects of folk-lore and regionalism, Ramuz has succeeded, after a

difficult struggle, in representing by his style, by the inflexions of his sentences and by the rather heavy and slow accent of his characters, the total impression which this landscape has made on his artistic sensibility.

Edmond Gilliard was born at Fiez, near Grandson, on 10 October 1875; after a childhood spent at Fiez, then at Sion in Valais, he studied literature at Lausanne, spent nine months in Germany and three years in Paris; then, from 1904 to 1935, was a member of the educational faculty in the Vaud; he was an incomparable teacher of French literature at Lausanne, and for several years had for a colleague the musician Ernest Ansermet, then professor of mathematics. From 1935 until the war, he lived in France, sometimes at Dieulefit, in the Drome province, and sometimes in Paris. The autumn of 1939 found him in Switzerland, where he again settled, at Fiez, his birthplace. This pedagogical career, straightforward and without apparent struggle, explains the concentration of Edmond Gilliard's effort on a problem ever more closely circumscribed, ever more profound, the problem of man, the problem of self.

His literary activity, closely connected with his preoccupations, began in 1914, when, with Paul Budry, he began to edit the *Cahiers vaudois*, which grouped together a talented company of young people: writers such as Ramuz, painters such as Blanchet and Auberjonois, and musicians such as Ansermet.

Then he published a dozen small volumes, extraordinarily rich in thought and style: penetrating studies of Rousseau, Vinet, Baudelaire, Ramuz and others; a new and bold attempt, in *Alchimie verbale*, to disengage poetry from language. *La passion de la mère et du fils*, a poem in which the influence of the Cabbala may be discerned, ascends to the most difficult, the most religious heights of poetry. Then followed a series of meditations of the ego, with *La croix qui tourne*, and the three volumes of *Le dramatique du moi*. *L'école contre la vie* is a virulent and passionate attack of an experienced but still young teacher against an absurd system which only a revolution can transform. In his *Journal*, far removed from the anecdotal and the 'historic', we find meditations, thoughts on the Word, on man, on God.

Edmond Gilliard is of fundamentally Protestant stock, and although he is completely severed from the Church, his deep-rooted hostility against Rome can only be explained by his Protestant origin. Everything about him is, at first sight, singular and baffling, because everything is original and authentic. His style, in which may be seen the influence of the eminently original work and the curious personality of an esoteric Fleming, S. U. Zanne, shows that, despite appearances, Edmond Gilliard does not however aim at originality: he is, in his philosophy, at the main source of things, whither he has succeeded in penetrating by a painful, desperate effort; he is at the mainspring of language.

Edmond Gilliard is a 'rouser', in his books as he was in his classes. He is a salutary rouser, who teaches not to be content with words, because he has too deep a knowledge and respect for them. The most original of our writers, he repels the imitation of disciples, imperiously ordering those who would follow in his footsteps to betake themselves to solitary meditation, which alone is capable of producing, in life as in the written word, the most precious jewel of all, a personal, authentic style, in one's own image.

It is at this point that Edmond Gilliard and Ramuz converge.

[Translated by NATALIA GALITZINE]

# IN THE VALLEY OF THE RHÔNE<sup>1</sup>

C.-F. RAMUZ

## I

IT was not by the shore of the lake. Neither was it on this vineyard of Lavaux which falls sheer and in one swoop towards the little inland sea which is our own. We had to leave these banks and go down into the valley where the great Rhône could scarcely be seen and where it is reduced to the poor dimensions of a torrent whose course is run almost secretly behind its steep banks in the middle of the reeds. Yet a famous vineyard used to be down there which was at that time among the best known in the country. Only the fame of wines, like that of people, is full of ups and downs, of insecurity and upheavals; and today, I believe, Yvorne hardly dares to carry its name, so much has it fallen from fashion. I no longer remember very clearly what kind of hats the women wore, nor how they did their hair, for me it seems enough that their skirts were very long, so much so that they used to sew on the bottom all round their fullness a kind of border which was called a flounce, a name whose full meaning we need not insist on. All fashions pass; and so it is that today this lovely golden wine of that time would seem suspect, now that the fashion is for what we call *vin gris*, that is to say for a wine without colour, a wine for people who don't know what wine is, a wine for a lot of foreigners, a wine for water swillers or dram drinkers. The Yvorne of that time was like the sun, it was the colour of buttercups, the colour of dandelion flowers; it was not a wine made only with the grape pulp, but with the whole skin, in short it was a complete wine and therefore a true one. Since then our days of hygiene and prophylactics have arrived and people distrust anything which is entire, that is to say, alive. We strain and pasteurize; we confuse purity with sterilization. Through the highly scholastic progress backwards of our civilization, the complexity of every real flavour has become synonymous with grossness and imperfection; the natural peeling away of things has given place to the brutal operations of chemistry, the nervous horror of

<sup>1</sup>From *Vendanges*, Mermod. Lausanne 1945.



germs or microbes has ended in the elimination of all wholesome pleasure. We separate the honey from the wax and now only employ liquid honey which is honey no longer. And in the same way we make wine which must look as chemically pure as water for it now to pass for wine, that is to say, if we wish to sell it: and since the vintners are compelled to sell the wine they make and consequently to follow the fashion, even when they disapprove of it, the lovely buttercup Yvorne of my childhood has been dethroned by a wine which no longer calls itself Yvorne, but Aigle, and which has become a *vin gris*. Nevertheless, in those days at the classical Cantonal School in the middle of October, we used to have three long weeks of holiday, and these were called the vintage holidays, and what was even more extraordinary, these holidays then fell in the high vintage season, for the old people will tell you that there were still seasons in those days and everyone knows that there are not any more since the so-called Great War, as if these earthly upheavals had had their repercussions in the sky. The old will tell you that in those days there was even more particularly an autumn, that is to say a season which was no longer summer, but which was not yet winter—while today, as everybody knows, and whatever is the name which the month happens to be called on the calendar, we take a full jump from August to December, from a temperature of eighty in the shade to two feet of snow, and ten degrees of frost. But then there were still autumns, whose most representative month (placed under the sign of the Scorpion) was October; and it used to be in October that we gathered the grapes; that is to say on a fixed date (we could still let the grape grow ripe and were in no hurry to pick it, it seemed never too sweet nor too golden, and this gave it those eleven and twelve degrees of alcohol, a strength which is no longer known); we used to gather the grapes then in the month of October and all through the month without hurrying: and thus it was that round about the sixth or the seventh, with a little brown canvas suitcase in my hand, I used to take the Simplon train, which was not yet the Simplon train, because the Simplon tunnel was not completed or had only just been bored, I cannot remember exactly. It was a slow train that stopped at all the stations. There were seventeen stations: I had very carefully counted and recounted them in advance from the time-table. The lake on my right hand was a lake in no hurry

to take leave of me (neither was I in any haste to see the last of it). A lake extremely modest in the discretion of its slow farewell, as were the shores and the succession of houses and telegraph poles which went by without giddy oscillation, while for quite fourteen times running the whole landscape became conveniently static and one could consider it at one's leisure before it entirely disappeared. Oh! how greedy was I at that time for all those things, for everything one could notice when ten years old after a first year of Latin, when already with a little boredom and fatigue I had just begun to learn *De Viris*—then suddenly the word goes out: 'close your books', while this other great book, whose pages are mountain and sky, opens before me and turns slowly over its columns illuminated with sails, steamboats and black-headed gulls.

## II

This plain of the Rhône has always been full of mystery for me, indeed, it still is. It was only two steps from the village and I very soon found the way there. As soon as it was possible for us to escape, we would hasten to run down, and I say 'we' because we were a whole band of little boys. The grape gatherings began for me underneath the vineyard in these regions where the overseers never came down, nor the women grape-pickers, in those fantastic regions which were all the more attractive because they were forbidden.

We used to find, among other things, wonderful sprigs of elder of which we used to make squirts. Suddenly we were imprisoned among the thickets and the reed patches which grew much higher than our heads. I remember this plain as a very special place where there were two sorts of path, one above the other, the paths of the earth and the paths of the sky. We who all came from the mountains and went to school in a town where there was not one street whose gradient isn't a severe test for a twenty horse-power car, were scarcely accustomed at all to these flat open spaces which were spread out at their narrowest in a width of ten kilometres and whose real surface was as flat as if it were on a surveyor's drawing board. The shortness of our stature there underwent the humiliation of being everywhere towered over and, as it were, swallowed up by the vegetation, without us being able to count on finding a way out from it.

Yet always in some places the mountain opposite, above a willow or behind two poplars, contrived to make some vague sign to us, a salute which we could never return, lost as we were in a vegetable world whose disorderly ranks held perpetual sway around us by their massive richness. The soft earth gave way under our feet; farther on, the mud was replaced only by sand which also was moving. We would follow a sloping path, which soon lost itself in brushwood, full of puddles or was cut into by half-submerged meadows producing only a poor pasture which was called 'flats' in that country, and which was no good except as litter for cattle and not as fodder, for nothing would eat it. These paths, or rather these double-paths, put me in a state of wonderment; there was one below me, but there was one above. They go two by two in my memories. There was the one which was under my feet and the other which was above my head, but so well drawn up there in its mixture of grey and blue by the two parallel lines of the undergrowth, that it seemed no less real, though made of cloud and air, than the other one of earth and sand. I need only throw up my head for the world to turn upside down, and yet remain the same; and for the flatness which was below to become that of a sky no less glossy, and where we seemed to be walking upside down. A world full of mystery, that is to say, of simultaneous terror and attraction. A world populated with every kind of 'other' animal, with 'other' flowers, 'other' leaves, 'other' plants, full of attraction because full of differences and full of contradictions. For animals are made to go on dry ground or to go in the water: here they were made to go at the same time in the water and on the ground; in the pools we fished for salamanders while the dragon-fly hung above as on a thread, hung its wings in the trembling air, and the trembling of its wings was like a mist, in the mist that was also the air. The roots of trees, which elsewhere were hidden, here showed their whitish tufts like the hair of a dead woman whose corpse is floating head downwards. The water was, at the same time, perfectly clear and quite black, and leaning over it I saw my reflection as in the quicksilver of a mirror with all the details of my face; then suddenly when I changed the angle, there was nothing, and the pool appeared again in all its empty depths full of a terrifying silence: am I inventing this? Impossible, for I still see in that water my sailor-blue cap with its border of red

lined with olive green and white which a sudden backward movement removes from sight, while the reflection is displaced into two white clouds like floating snow in a smear of blue sky. And the cries of unknown birds grew louder, for here the birds did not sing but screeched, and suddenly flew off, letting me see, below their noisy wings, two long legs which they folded up or let hang down like sticks. Finally it is the smell that I remember, all those powerful odours which were not dissipated, as on dry land, where they come up to you frankly, and surround you, little by little, but here were trodden down by my feet, sullenly dissimulated, hidden in the interior of the water or the mud, until they are all at once disturbed by a footfall, so that they seemed to explode all round me, taking me by the throat and making me cough and sneeze. Smells of 'poison', for that is the word for it, and we know that when children say of something that it is poison, it has an extraordinary interest for them, and that explains the attraction which these marshes of the Rhône held for us. Childhood willingly moves towards such things by secret and forbidden ways; it goes most freely and most passionately for life in the places where it feels it to be threatened, at least in its imagination, that is to say, where it recognizes the possibility of death. Above all, it conceives a passion for those dangerous fruits, like deadly nightshade, and other hedgerow berries, or among mushrooms, for the poisonous toadstools, among insects for those with a sting, and among those which sting, for the ones which sting worst: we used to tell each other, for example, that it took only three stings of a hornet to kill a man, with seven for a horse and twelve for an elephant. We had a taste, should I call it unhealthy? for those blue velvet flies, for those beasts with hanging folds of skin like the toad or the bat, for everything which was malformed, secret, nocturnal, condemned to solitude and shade, for everything which made us frightened—and it was all these things together that we found in these marshes. It was the attraction of forbidden fruit for the child, in other words, I think, the attraction of evil in its symbolical forms. And we got goose-flesh and made vague movements of repulsion which this mysterious attraction would transform into a new plunge forward. Oh! even today I remember this smell of rotten wood, these odours of toadstools trodden underfoot, these exhalations of cellars and of night—at the same time so attractive and repulsive,



so cold and so full of mustiness, fugitive and intangible, yet never forgotten, holding simultaneously the decay of life and its new beginnings, the dissolution and the seed; the mysterious points of contact between birth and death—and it is perhaps because the child who still has no knowledge of death but a divination of it, is passionately drawn towards it as being an essential ingredient of future knowledge.

We never went very far into the plains of the Rhône, but I do not remember ever going into the vineyards above without having first climbed down there, usually in secret. Today they are both mysteriously blended for me, and that is why I mention it with those grape-gatherings which we had just made. There is a peculiar association in my memory between its smells and those of the cellars, and of the unfermented wine in the wine-press. I can still see myself walking with a stoop head downwards, and with my two hands opening a passage through the high grass. We followed these paths which led nowhere, and lost themselves on the earth at the same time as they were lost in the sky, where branches of the thickets closed over them. Then from time to time, a vista would open as through a skylight in the branches, sometimes towards the mountains on the right, and sometimes to those on the left bank. Here in a deep cutting in the middle of the plain of earth which, little by little, has taken the place of the plain of water while strictly marking its disposition, the Rhône is dominated on its two sides by two high mountain ranges. I would put my head through one of these skylights and lift it up till it faced completely heavenwards. The right bank was that which contained the vineyard because it had the best exposure. It faced towards the south but, at the same time, slightly towards the east and held the sun for longer, a sun which fell less obliquely there than on the other side. As soon as the slope began to grow steep the vints appear, surrounding the village with its big grey and white houses and their brown roofs. There was hardly room for a few round or pointed clumps of trees in the gardens. A village, not so much spread out as stretched out, and already the slope, as it becomes steeper, throws off all habitations under its cloak of vine-roots of beautiful canary yellow, in places faintly tinted with green or blue, in others with rose or brown. As soon as the sun was up it illuminated in lovely clear colours this hillside, or rather, the

lower half of it, for this is no longer Lavaux, where the slow gradient enables the vines to climb right up to the sky and where the mountain is all grape from the blue water to the blue of heaven. Here through our skylights, open to the north, we could see the entire mountain whose vineyards encroached only on the lower part, while it rose on up to seven or even eight thousand feet. As I bent my head backwards the beautiful thin wash of clear colour on the canvas soon gave place to a blacker hue with, towards the summit, huge forests of overhanging pines, interlaced with gorges scarred with grey by the beds of the torrents. Even higher, the slope grew more gentle. It became green and unified, for there were the high pasture lands under strange horns and white sugar-loafs of a clear grey or slate colour, according to the light, sometimes violet in the storm or rose beneath the setting sun. Oh Rhône! It is indeed your very good fortune and also the mark of your particular destiny, that these wonderful surroundings are there for you, and for you alone, from your source to your mouth. I was then only a little boy and knew you only here, in fact, not far from your birthplace, but I truly believe that my heart had already divined something of those promises in which you were so rich, so rich that your whole course did not suffice to exhaust them. For, on the other side and on your left bank an equal care had raised up for you this high wall of deep blue, across which, in every one of its indentations, the play of the light set up ladders of sunshine. It was there, as if a dream had come to increase all the visible world, and without refutation or contradiction, to set it at the extreme limit of reality. There, on the loveliest days, and while the warmer slope was shining in all its colours, there was already a favourable twilight, and there I have seen rise up Jacob's ladder itself. It was necessary to look higher still in the heaven, towards the summit of the chain whose profile disappeared in a double veil of shadow and sky: then above it, there fell huge slats of sunshine, exactly as when one sets a ladder of new wood, or of wood newly planed, against a wall. And all along these sky-ladders continually, beautiful indistinct forms rose up and descended, making the earth commune with the heaven—as in the Bible, as when Jacob was a man like us (because we had had our two hours of Biblical story every week at school). But still farther up, in regions even more empyrean there came the great

wonder. I see it in the depths of myself as seven kneeling women with their hands joined, clothed in white. Clothed in white, up there, or in gold or silver or pink, according to the time of day, but so shining and ærial that they seemed already withdrawn from the material world: right up there towards the south, and above the great black gorges where the twilight always reigns, and they, on the contrary, always in the light: seven great kneeling women, quite separated from us by a first threshold of air, placed there the one beside the others on their knees at heaven's gate; pink, yellow, all in gold, or all in silver and, even as they transfigured it, illuminating all space: the seven summits of the Dents du Midi remote among their glaciers and their snows.

[Translated by C. C.]

## EXTRACTS FROM 'JOURNAL'

### EDMOND GILLIARD

At certain times, anarchy is the only means which order has at its disposal to re-establish its hierarchy.

*Du droit de protéger découle irresistiblement le droit de persécuter.*—  
VINET.

Good definition of the police.

Violence. That which is called established order is only a state of violence which has become habitual. There is no injustice, insult, iniquity, indignity, brutality or barbarity on which duration cannot confer, through habit, an appearance of morality, a veneer of decorum, a false gloss of decency.

Then conscience begins to revolt. This is called violence, because it is manifestly subversive. Those who give rein to convulsionary violence are victims of organized violence, which we have travestied into traditional authority.

Humanity is the personality of God.

All my life, I have done only one thing: searched for nakedness.

He who does not reach death naked is not reborn clean. If death can still strip you of something, you have not finished your last toilet.

Christ's nakedness—his trial by nakedness—has been spoiled by that cloth they put round his loins. In actual fact, a man on a cross could only be stark naked.

The earth is but a corpse. That is to say, food offered to nourish the seed. That is why the earth is sown. I have never understood cemeteries. Concentration camps of unemployed dead. The real Field of the Dead is a cornfield.

Believe: 'Earth, earth!'

The idea of my body being burned revolts me. I have a horror of this violence. I want my flesh to return to earth quite gently; that it may be digested by the seasons in the heart of the earth.

Why a coffin? A shroud is enough. That my human sweat may mingle with the moisture of the earth. Why should I not be buried in my garden? I hate cemeteries with their paths, their memorial 'incrustations'.

Under the ponderous stone, the flesh flees into the earth. The worms make a field of it. . . .

. . . In order that earth may become bread, through the corn, and that bread, through the soul, may be made new flesh. 'Eat, this is my Body' . . .

But the body had to pass through the earth to become edible.

The soul, too, feeds on that which has rotted.

I have always only done what I had to do. That is not an admission of excessive vanity. It is something naturally experienced and reasonably obvious. We can only do what we must.

And *whatever we may have done*, we have fulfilled our 'duty'.

There has never been a *fact* which is not the *result* of the *Law*. Nothing can be outside the law.

Whatever we do not do is always exactly what we should not do. For this reason alone, that it has not been done.

That is what I mean by being free. We are *inevitably* free.

If you want to know what time is, feel your pulse; feel it slipping away under your thumb.

I am from a small country: my greatness can only be individual.

I cannot borrow any clothing from it which would not be too short. Nakedness alone restores my proportions.



That is why, while clinging so strongly to my birth (born naked) I get rid of my nationality. By that very fact.

Thanks to heaven I cannot make use of my country to make an impression in the world. I am Vaudois by stripping myself and not by clothing myself. This expression reduces me to myself. What a failure to be a 'national glory'.

My enjoyment is of a kind that cannot exist without suffering. My enjoyment is tempered with anxiety. For this reason it is invincible.

I refuse to suffer because of others; I wish only to suffer *on my own account*. Only then will I have the right to suffer *for* others. USEFULLY.

I am only an intermediary (author); for this reason I cannot put up with the duplicity of the actor.

I cannot bear the theatre because the author there is compelled to be transmitted by the functions of the actor.

To be played . . . to consent to be played! I read plays. I cannot listen to them.

I always suffer from moral weariness when faced by an actor. That has nothing to do with Christian contempt. It is my human modesty which suffers. The horror of being another's instrument. I can only be my own instrument.

I have never known how to recite. Not only because of a faulty memory. But because of the embarrassment of borrowing, and a horror of parasitism.

I cannot admit that writing is not completely self-sufficient. The more poetic it is the less the human voice is needed for it. Poetic hearing is internal. Poetic hearing is imaginary. What distinguishes poetry from music is that the essence of poetry is 'abstractly' sonorous.

As soon as we sing verse we kill it. . . . When we recite it, we betray it.

I have always been unable to recite from memory. I could never learn by heart.

What I have written creatively immediately escapes repetition. I can only be spontaneous.

To 'know me by heart' would be to distort me, to disgrace me—to hand me over to prostitution. To desert my path, to sell me on the street.

When I was twenty, I felt ill at ease amongst the young: at sixty I feel the same amongst the old. My contemporaries have never been 'sufficient' for me; they have always embarrassed me.

[*Translated by* NATALIA GALITZINE and PETER WATSON]

## ROUSSEAU AND THE FACE OF LOVE

### MARCEL RAYMOND

#### *Fragment*

'Plunged, since my childhood, into the whirlwind of society, I quickly learnt from experience that I was not made to live there, and that there I would never reach the condition of which my heart felt the need.'

(*Troisième Promenade*)

GREATER than anecdote, beyond any biographical study, the fragments of an interior portrait can be gathered together. There are gestures, feelings, which reveal the whole man, and give both colour and meaning to his life. Similarly these feelings and these attitudes can alter a life, and decide, perhaps, what a man is, and what he can never aspire to be.

With Rousseau the faces of love are the faces of life: they are struck with the seal of his own likeness: they carry the mark of a personal destiny. In his 'adventures', the desire for, and the dream of, 'myself' wanting to gain possession of a personal universe where Eros's magic was in full possession, conflict with the outside world, and come up against the other characters in the drama. For Rousseau, the soul, because it follows too easily 'the impulses of nature, rebounds from the shock of meeting an obstacle as a bowl on the green makes an angle of reflection' (*First Conversation*). But, in spite of these words, it is possible that these detours, these evasions and retreats, show us, as much as anything else, the true direction of his life.

'She had a tender and caressing manner, a gentle look, a heavenly smile, a mouth such as mine, and hair touched with unusual beauty.' And that spiritual gift, 'a voice silvered with youth'. With Madame de Warens, at first, he is what he was with Madame Basile, or, as a child, with his aunt at Geneva

standing or seated . . . watching her embroider, hearing her sing', and without a will of his own, a tiny playful companion watching for a sign from 'Mama'. Or, even more, a kind of slave or valet.

When he describes their first meetings, Rousseau hesitates to confess that he loves her: 'Let us suppose that my feelings for her were really those of love, which will seem doubtful to those who follow the story of our liaison. . . .' In her presence his senses were scarcely troubled: he felt neither 'elation nor desires' he was 'in a state of delectable peace. . . .'

Nevertheless, from the beginning of their friendship he sometimes dreamed 'deliciously' of her, and from time to time he would imagine that he was her lover. But only when he found himself apart from her, pursuing a solitary path. In her absence, it was no longer entirely her, her alone, that he loved; with distance, the sparkle of her face and charm became depersonalized to merge into the world of dreams which stood at the horizon of his thought and which, rising up at his slightest call, would envelop him entirely and fill him with their music. As he came to know her better, he had almost made up his mind that she was quite out of the question for him. Little by little, as he grew aware of the ties which bound him to her, and knew their nature, he perceived that he was showing small wisdom in thus entrusting his daily happiness so far out to sea on this smiling ocean. In the company of his 'good Mama', and the very real tranquillity she gave him, all the melodies which grew out of his orphan's imagination were, in themselves, enough to fill his heart to overflowing. It must be remembered that, at this time, he was still no more than a child.

When he was nearly twenty-two, Madame de Warens decided to protect him from getting into mischief. It was after several 'reasonable' talks, full of her quality of persuasion, and at the end of a week of torment, that Rousseau saw himself as one on whom had been *imposed* a personality which was offensive to his most secret wishes. Who would dare to say that he was insensitive? But the obstacles within himself were too serious and the downfall was painful. While Madame de Warens remained (apparently) 'indifferent' or hid herself behind the pose of a governess, he admits his 'invincible sadness'. One sentence says everything: 'I felt as if I had committed an incest'.

It was a love, carefully composed, sensual, but infiltrated with filial tenderness and gratitude; an anxious love which profoundly wounded Rousseau. Now it even hurts him to say the name 'Mama': a deep dissatisfaction overcomes him. Moreover, the duration of the 'love' was far shorter than we are apt to think: perhaps three years, but three years continually interrupted by travel to Nyon, Geneva and Lyons: the 'pretexts' were not lacking, he says in Book V of the *Confessions*, and so he had 'a fairly itinerant life'. Doubtless it was at The Charmettes that he knew the 'short happiness of his life', and perhaps since 1736 (if it be true that the 'Maison Noirai' was lived in by Madame de Warens before being taken on a long lease with its lands): but he only felt it with distressing interludes and, despite illness of all kinds, from the day when the liaison took on a new character.

During the summer of 1737, in fact, Jean-Jacques went to Geneva where he received part of his mother's inheritance. As soon as he got back he left for Montpellier, from where he returned only in the following spring, to find in his place a tutor, the ex-valet Winzenried, who had given himself the more distinguished title of Monsieur de Courtille. Without any uncharitable motives Madame de Warens would have liked to share them both—but Rousseau refused.

But what is certain is that, at the very time when he was 'treated as a man' and when at last he was trying to make love to his so-called 'Mother', some instinct in him impelled him to imagine with all his power some other being, some phantom or sylphide, rather than the one he held in his arms. Here again, the *Confessions* leave no place for elaboration: 'I had a loving mother, a friend whom I cherished, but what I needed was a mistress. I imagined one for myself, and I created her in a thousand shapes to give variety to my relationship.' The sentence which follows goes to the base of things. In the moment of making love, his thoughts were elsewhere.

If he succeeded in loving anyone, it was another. Shortly afterwards he begins to speak of his illnesses: lassitude, and the threat of consumption, throbbing in the arteries, humming in his ears and the onset of deafness. Seeking the cause of all these troubles which are costing him his 'mania for travel' he puts the blame on his 'passions'. First, music, to the study of which he gives himself up with a 'consuming' zeal, 'sometimes spending entire



nights in copying'. A real madness. His second madness is 'women'. Which women? Other women—those which he sees in the street, those of which he dreams, and whose image he forces himself to evoke. 'At that time I was burning with a love which had no object'; we should note that this sentence refers to the period of his liaison.

But his resistance does not end here. He gives himself up to another mania; for two or three months, shut up alone in his room day and night, bent over books, he teaches himself chess. If he happens to go out he is 'almost torpid like a beast dug out of its lair'. His health deteriorates perceptibly, and this rapid weakening results in a 'cooling of his ardours'. Fits of weeping shake him horribly, melancholy overtakes him, and the thought of death is always present: 'What a gentle death, if it had but come then!'

Rousseau quite clearly was making himself ill. Without knowing it, he was appealing to nature to extract him from an intolerable situation. This explanation may seem strange. There is no doubt that at that time Rousseau was suffering from various physiological disorders, the probable result of the circumstances of his birth. But these disasters overtook him at a certain moment. Thus there are people who 'create' their illnesses, with all their organic complications, in order to put an end to 'emotional' adventures with insoluble moral problems. 'Through care, through vigilance and unbelievable effort, she saved me' we read in the *Confessions*. But it was the illness which saved him by rescuing him from his impasse. It was now his turn to impose, through his very weakness, the kind of love-relationship which he desired. 'I became entirely her handiwork, entirely her child, and more so than if she had been my real mother,' and he adds that he was allowed to taste the happiness of a mutual possession which depended not on sex, on the senses, but 'on all those things by which one is oneself'.

So now we have Rousseau, getting up at night, penetrating into 'Mama's' room, staying beside her, but to give her 'advice on her conduct . . . full of wisdom and good sense'. And always, tenderness draws down the veil of tears: 'as if tears were my food and my medicine, I drew strength from those I shed beside her, with her, sitting on her bed and holding her hands in mine. The hours flowed by in these nocturnal conversations, and I went

away feeling better than when I had come; happy and calm in the promises she had made, in the hopes she had given me, I slept on them with peace of mind and resignation to the ways of Providence.' What were these hopes and promises? We can imagine that there may have been advice on domestic economy (she needed it). But what did those tears mean, this comforting, this peace of a pious mind turning little by little towards her again, if there was no question of anything else between them? If Rousseau's daily words of wisdom did not have another, more personal, meaning (which she perhaps hardly understood), if they did not betray the deep wish to return to a more happy state, to invent a sort of alibi, to open a way to his lost childhood?

Once more the *Confessions* are completely explicit. For him it is not enough to get back to childhood, he wants to become an angel. 'My heart gave itself up to everything with the abandon of an angel.' He knows that he is going to die. And with this thought the moment takes on for him an exquisite flavour; and, above all, his battle comes to an end, the struggle to live, to try to keep going in the 'whirlwind' in the middle of society. With all the force of his passive powers Jean-Jacques gave himself up to this present which he is allowed to enjoy with the abandon of an angel, and he believes that by this rupture with the world, this progressive detachment, he has recreated 'the innocent Paradise of childish loves'.

The time has come to love God in Nature—the time for ecstasy. This retreat and this shedding of ties call to mind certain phases of the mystics: non-action lulls the will and gives life to a new joy. Having got up before dawn he walks in the orchard of The Charmettes, still damp from the dew, contemplating God in his works and 'his heart rises within him' (Book VI of the *Confessions*). 'I can say that my prayers were pure, and by that worthy of being heard. For myself and for those from whom my desires were never separated, I only asked an innocent and tranquil life, free from vice, from pain, difficult tasks, from the just man perishing and his fate in the future . . .' He wanders slowly in the intoxication of the early morning hours, gazing up at Madame de Warem's window on his return; 'the shutters opened, I went to kiss her in bed, often still half asleep; and this embrace, as pure as it was tender, had through its very innocence, a charm which is never found in the pleasures of the senses'.

Sometimes Rousseau wrote down these prayers. Two of them have reached us. 'Thanks be to God', he wrote, 'for having united us, one to the other . . .' For his thoughts never left her; he does not distinguish his future from hers, for him nothing matters except being together for life, and their salvation. 'You are our Creator, we are the work of your goodness, you are our Father, we are your children.' Would not one say that here was a couple awaiting benediction, for that is what it is, 'give your holy blessing to our union, that it may help to rouse us mutually to serve you'.

These appeals (which have been dated from 1738 and which are perhaps earlier) could make a painful impression: this language can appear equivocal. For my part I find them sincere; above all Rousseau is destined to affirm an 'innocence' reconquered and always threatened. Also they were a 'holy' weapon against Madame de Warens who must be made to understand that her role is that of 'protector', nothing more than 'Mama'. 'Lead us always in the paths of virtue: never let us stray. . . .'

Does Rousseau deceive himself, does he want to deceive himself (before God!) on the value of words? Did the sophisms of Madame de Warens blind him to this extent? It is hardly conceivable. At the same time we are too quick to indignation or to laughter ('oh! what delicious *virtue!*') because this word 'virtue' recurs with an insistence which is not fortuitous in *Le Verger de Madame de Warens*, Rousseau's first work to be printed in 1739. It must be admitted that this orchard was not always the 'home of virtue'. But it becomes increasingly so from the day on which the ties of physical love began to slacken before they broke. Moreover, it is not impossible that the bad habits of the adolescent took hold of him again when the liaison 'ceased'; we can even wonder whether the desire to overcome these habits by methods she considered to be infallible, did not play a part in Madame de Waren's decision to draw him out of childhood. I do not think that Rousseau is vaguely developing the themes of the Christian prayers, I believe he is thinking concretely of his life when he asks God to pity his 'weaknesses', to destroy his 'vice'. 'I feel', he says, 'that all the pleasures which my passions painted for me in the desertion of wisdom, have become for me worse than illusion, and that they are changed into hateful bitterness.'

Confronted with the idyllic picture of happiness at The Charmettes which the *Confessions* gives us, where the hues of Nature blend ideally with those of innocence, we can guess that under memory's magic the past has given birth to a golden age. But the prayers are the unimpeachable contemporary witnesses. Yes, Rousseau made an effort over himself, he freed himself from his ties, he rejected the personality that his conscience condemned: and it is his nature which invents by instinct a dangerous remedy for his guilty love.

In the midst of his troubles, of his lassitude, of his torments, he felt himself improving. And I do not deny that he made serious efforts to reform his life. Nevertheless, we must recognize the fact, of which Rousseau's life is so rich in examples, that his courage was reinforced by his weakness. His nature revolted, but this did not force him to a difficult victory, or to seek out a new and permanent way of behaviour. In pulling off his lover's mask, he made a new retreat from the 'world' and its responsibilities. He was obeying his vocation, that of renunciation. This simple condition of a balance between desire and imagination, this state of happy passivity, whose charm he had so often experienced, his future task was to make it more profound and more pure. How could his conscience have reproached him?

And besides, embedded in his illness (and it is of little importance that, unknowingly, he first wanted it!—this could only make him more attached to it), protected by illness, he falls back on all that is deepest in his nature, at the same time that he 'renounces living'. While changing his own role, he suggests at the same time another to Madame de Warens: given back to himself, or to put it more simply, having become again the person he wishes to remain for ever, he invites her, for her happiness, to take up her maternal mission. As before, he will be for her the child who comes and goes without haste, engaged in idle occupations, and who likes nothing so much as the close contemplation of a smiling face, illumined by a gaze of sweetness which asks nothing more. Now there is no possible way of going back, he will never again betray his heart.

What wonderful defences he has erected! What was necessary to him was that his desire should never be attached to any object, that Eros should remain in attendance on an ardent mind which was always free, that he should remain friendly to the appeal of



chimeras, ready to incarnate itself in everything, and always capable of 'enchanting' the landscape. Then the spirit of love can shine freely, sympathizing with the forms and movements of the universe, unfolding in contemplation, the loved one being now no more than a gentle glow which sheds its lustre on all the surroundings. And Nature becomes the altar, as we said in former times, where the cult of the oneness of the universe is celebrated, where the human powers of adoration are perpetually consumed, only to rise again out of their ashes. This road, which is that of passing beyond oneself, is, at the same time, that of all mysticism with a pantheistic tendency.

Another road, where the face of love is closed, or more simply veils itself, is that of morality. Before Madame de Warens Rousseau preaches virtue, and multiplies the counsels of wisdom. The happiness which he thus tastes is less immediate and less substantial than that which he finds in contemplation. In return, his good conscience lights up and he is better able to satisfy his need for self-esteem: perhaps this ever-present invigoration of moral feelings is but another form of the 'will to power'. It is the beginning of a long progression of moralization of Nature, and of his own human nature, whose effects will appear right up to his theories of politics and sociology: a remunerative exercise which hardens his pride while it leans upon his weakness, since it expends itself not in acts, but in ideas, words, and noble sentiments. And if Nature is 'good', there can be no guilt of any kind attached to a life passed quietly in its bosom. Rousseau sees himself justified: ecstasy is allowed him; he can sacrifice everything to the deepest inclinations of his being.

[From '*Lettres*'. Marcel Raymond, professor of literature at Geneva and Basle, is author of the well-known '*De Baudelaire à Surréalisme*'.]

[Translated by SONIA BROWNELL]

# THE ARTS IN SWITZERLAND

## ON A CERTAIN ASPECT OF SWITZERLAND

PIERRE COURTHION

NOTHING is more difficult than to make our own self-portrait: we both love and hate ourselves. Between the over-complacent pose and the self-disgust, there is room for the sharper character features, the alterations, and the sly reserves of suggestion. We believe we are distinguishable from our neighbour, we recognize in ourselves some peculiarity which is apparently a quality or a defect. We are from here or from somewhere else. We don't eat that kind of bread, we don't speak the same language (or we speak three of them). We retain certain habits (with which the conservatives of clothing and of customs struggle hard to clothe our fathers' memory). We say: *at home*, because of the frontier-post 25 metres away, the postage-stamps engraved on fine paper, the reassuring organization of charity enterprises. Ultimately we are almost astonished to rediscover that we are men, quite simply men like other men.

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First of all, this is a country of hawkers, of fairs, of miraculous draughts of fish, a country of static chivalry, that painted by Conrad Witz, our Fouquet. Then the red and the white carnation intersect beneath the great picture of angels and of the executed: signature of the anonymous Master. And then there are the bad lads, the riotous *Losbube*, in love with mercenary adventure, possessed by erotic imagination. These harlequins of death advance, with plumed hats, in front of a hedge of pikes and pennants. The emblem W.W.W., Wein, Würfel und Weiber (Wine, Dice and Women) is engraved on the sheath of their daggers.



COLAS MANUEL, 1484-1530: Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand. *Kunstmuseum Bern*



NICOLAS MANUEL: Flute Player.  
Drawing.  
*Basle Museum*



URS GRAF: Standard Bearer. Drawing.  
*Basle Museum*



NICOLAS MANUEL: Pyramus and Thisbe.

*Basle Museum*



S GRAF:  
o women assaulting a monk.  
wing.

*Basle Museum*



Woman killing herself by a stream.

*Basle Museum*



NICOLAS, MANUEL: Lucretia.

*Basle Museum*

Photographs by W. Speiser, Basle except Nicolas Manuel 'Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand' courtesy of Kunstmuseum Berne

Two of these soldiers, Nicolas Manuel of Berne and Urs Graf of Soleure, have made broad pen, charcoal or chalk drawings of episodes from their turbulent lives: sketches of human combat which recall from far off, those of an André Masson. Trophies of feathers, shoulder-belts smacking round their bodies, impaled hearts brandished on the end of lances by mad virgins, decapitated knights who advance head in hand, tortures, whips and burning-mirrors, all the workshop of pleasure and of blood parades, in Manuel's work, beneath the statues of Saint Sebastian, of the Virgin and of Christ in torment. There is the strange procession of the naked Venuses, with full stomachs, hats on their heads, garter provocatively knotted just under the knee, one playing the flute, one carrying the standard, another distributing coins. The connections are those of physical love. I can hear the whispers of the soldiers and of the woman go-between. It is the crude temptation of the purse hanging at the bottom of the skirt—the whore.

I recall two drawings by Urs Graf. One, which reminds one of a passage of *Justina*, shows the courtyard of a convent in which two women, astride a monk, are flagellating the good father with their bunches of keys. In the other one, a drowning drunkard, hanging on to the rotted branch of a tree, throws an exceedingly lascivious look under the petticoats of the girl of the inn who is walking along by the water's edge, looking the other way.

Such scenes as these (but can we call them scenes?) hardly show the sentiment of the equality of man before death as do the Swabian 'Dances of death' and that one which Holbein will paint in his turn. No, these violent pages in which we also see Lucretias stabbing themselves with an exaggerated frenzy, mean something quite different. Under the pen-line of Urs Graf and Nicolas Manuel, death assumes broad, licentious gestures: it seems to identify itself with bodily pleasure and to be its strongest incentive. Cruelty, a cruelty which we must really call *sadistic* (although it oddly anticipates the fantasies of the Marquis) gives these drawings that quality of experience which, according to Jean Paulhan, makes the worst when faced frankly the enemy of evil; they are the brutal statement of the perversity which man's mind can contain in its sensual state. Exhibitionism, cruelty, wounds and disguises, all this coincidence of blood, pleasure and death can already be found in the painting of Hans Fries (the forerunner of our two foot-soldier painters), showing the

martyrdom of I forget which saint, in which her executioners are crushing the nipple of her breast with enormous pincers. I also remember a sculpture from the old 'Grossmünster' in Bâle: Samson, in a pose which is more than *débonnaire*, with his rakish stomach showing beneath his open breeches, is being shaved as if he were a sheep by a corpulent Delilah, very jaunty in her 'hausfrau' costume.

Urs Graf mostly made drawings. We only know of one painting by him, the little sketch of *War* in the Bâle Museum. Nicolas Manuel on the other hand only painted. He has written, in old Gothic patois, poems, lampoons, and carnival jokes against the 'Pope and his priesthood'. This mercenary, after fighting for François I at the time of the Milanese campaigns, joined the side of Erasmus and the Reformers. In Bâle, as in Flanders, the Reformation chiefly supported the side of the Libertines. In Geneva, on the other hand, Calvinism introduced, with the iconoclast's austerity of customs, phrases without adjectives in *refugee* style and a to-the-letter commentary of writings.

If I have stressed this period (even at the risk of giving these notes an only too obvious lack of proportion) it is because at that time, before 1522, Swiss art has shown its most distinctive characteristic. Is it not the last to give *the devil*, that inheritance from the Middle Ages, *his due* in such an obvious way, and to do so towards the end of the Renaissance? In the following centuries, Switzerland is increased by several cantons which one after the other come to emphasize the medley of its configuration and of its styles. Without speaking of Rousseau, names come into one's mind: Liotard, the 'Turkish painter'; Lavater and his study of physiognomy; J. H. Füssli (Fuseli), creator of all the Romantic movement, who was English by choice; Gottfried Keller; and the fantastic and Brueghel-like naturalism of the '*Gens de Seldwylla*', Töpffer, whose astonishing caricatures seem like illustrations for Dickens stories.

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The break with all the values of the past which resulted in most other countries from the catastrophes of the war and which has hardly been repaired by their liberation was never experienced by us, nor has it affected our peaceful habit of complacent reassurance. It is quite true that we mistrust the shoddy,



the 'latest thing' and the flashy: but we also shyly overlook real originality. Visitors are none the less surprised at the quantity and number of men with a wide outlook to be met in this 'world in a nutshell'. On the other hand, they are surprised at the isolation of these personalities in respect of the society which remains closed (fortunately, perhaps, in one respect!) to everything which surpasses the average understanding, that is to say, a state of suspicion bordering on stupidity. Also in this country where the popular and peasant environments have remained very healthy and generous, there is a really excessive respect for money. Too many banks!

Almost all the French-speaking Swiss writers of value live or have lived in Paris. Some, like Blaise Cendrars, Charles-Albert Cingria, Jacques Mercanton, have their headquarters there. Marcel Raymond and Albert Béguin (both professors at the Universities of Geneva and Bâle) have finished their education there; for the time being they are staying on Swiss soil where one can work in enviable solitude. This is how C.-F. Ramuz, facing all the difficulties in this country where criticism often stifles the confidence and adventurousness necessary for creation, has achieved the feat of strength to write his work of universal importance by the lakeside beneath the houses of Lausanne, after paying only a few years' visit to the banks of the Seine, in the Montparnasse district. The slow and plastic rhythm of Ramuz, if it has had scarcely any effect on elder writers such as Edmond Gilliard—the father of the 'Cahiers Vaudois' group—can be recognized in much of the writing of today, and even in the finished prose of Gustave Roud. On the other hand, the Catholic religious thought of Charles Journet exerts a really beneficial influence on non-conformist youth; and the spirited mind of Karl Barth has awakened many consciences. It is none the less true that everything of value in Switzerland exists not only outside all officialdom, but deprived of all encouragement, and even of all local appreciation. In French-speaking Switzerland I see the vigorous writers of good stock like trees producing fruit which is too full of flavour to be appreciated on the spot, where the radio and the literary page of the *Journal de Genève* prefers to them the cider-pear of some small tree.

Against these wandering currents, these makers of cantonal glories, is opposed the young team comprising the magazine

*Lettres* where appear the names of Maurice Chappaz, the philosophic explorer of the Forest of Finges, the poet, Georges Haldas and the young Kafka expert, Jean Starobinski.

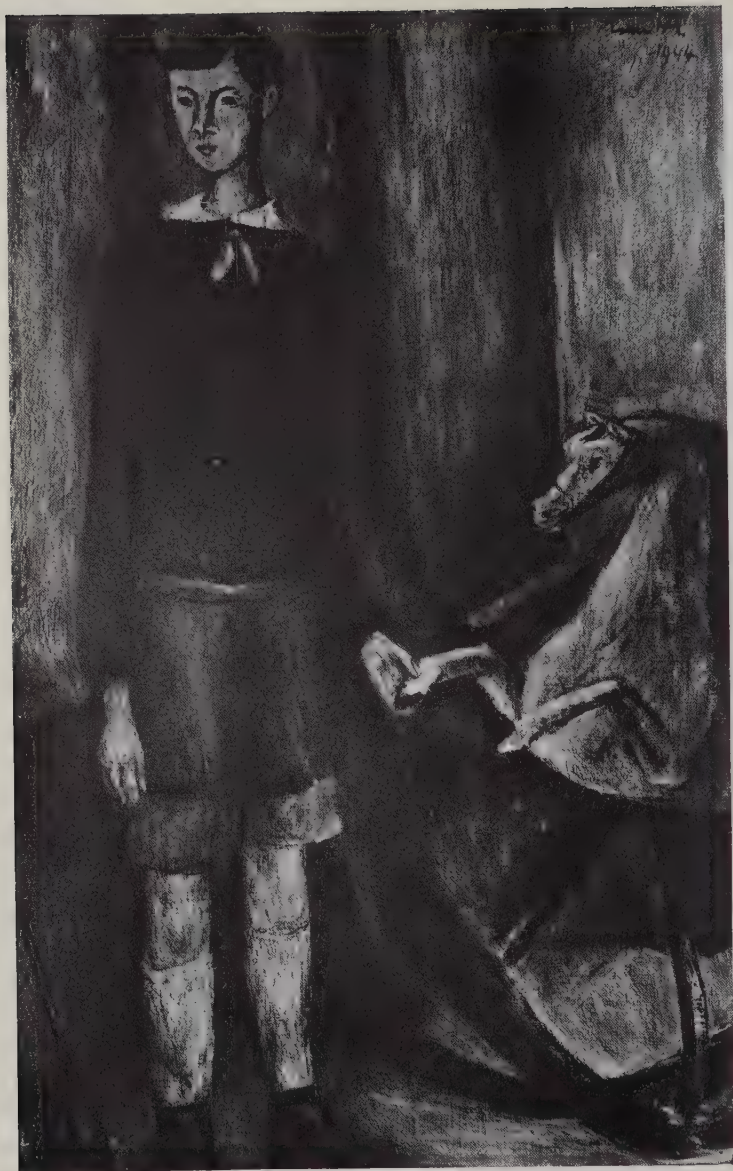
Music is chiefly represented by Frank Martin, who has composed a remarkable work on the *Tristan* theme of Joseph Bédier, written for two or three voices, a choir and several instruments: *le Vin Herbé*. In painting, Auberjonois (the only real painter known in Switzerland since Félix Vallotton) works in Lausanne in a labyrinth of screens in his studio on the Grand-Chêne. I like his draughtsmanship which is never finished, his quite magical way of catching the real, his palette of saffron yellows, old clear blues, and faded cinnabar. A secret emotion, of a rather complicated ingenuity, permeates the last works of this man who has always had a horror of facility. In sculpture, Alberto Giacometti, coming temporarily from Paris where he has already returned, has continued his researches in Geneva since 1942.

This is a funny sort of a sketch for a portrait, isn't it, dear English friends? It's like those incongruous faces, composed of fish, fruit and vegetables, which Archimboldo painted. How can we rediscover today the unity of this curious harlequin, possessed of a glorious past and of an undisturbed present? I have only made a partial sketch of the Switzerland of writers and artists, taken care only to retain in these notes what will produce a lively impression on the man of 1945. This is not an impression of lukewarmness, of constant neutrality or of the absolute and cataleptic order, peculiar to too many Swiss. For, in the majority, we are not more than we have ever been. The character of the savage independance of the 'Waldstätten', the warlike features of the wildly dreaming mercenaries, have little by little softened themselves into the correct face on the banner with the be-ribboned shoulder-band. Then quiet portraits, the delightful confectionary of the water-colour landscapes, lead us far beyond the eighteenth century, to the carefully observed romanticism of the rural idyll. Since Jean-Jacques, our French-Swiss eroticism has hidden itself under the leaves of the young elms in an exalted or perverse love of nature or amongst the endlessly dusty pages of a private diary. However, there was Keller and his *Grüne Heinrich*, the renewal of the struggle of the personality against habit. And today it is Ramuz and *Derborence*, the novel of the elemental.



RENE AUBERJONOIS: Portrait in a black hat. 1940.

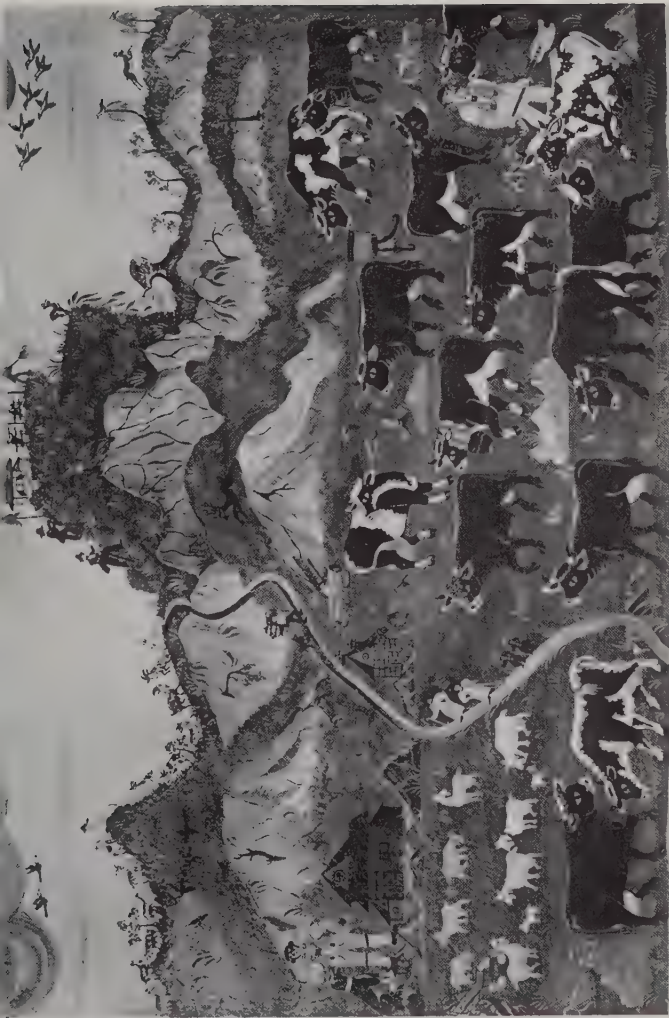
*Collection M. Heubi, Lausanne*



RENE AUBERJONNOIS: Boy with Rocking Horse. 1944.

*Collection Dr. J. Hänggi, Zürich*





Die Ansicht der Kaunshörner, Der Koth, Kasten, und  
2. Stäuben, 1854.

BARTHELMY LAEMMLER: Appenzell painting, 1854.





Recent events have reawakened the savage instincts. Butterfly-catchers, mountain excursionists, 'thinkers', have given way to the man who is anxious about his own destiny. Hatred has revived love. The physical and bodily aspect of humanity, the mountains, milk and blood, have recovered their bitterness and ferocity. The wolf and the wild boar have made a new appearance among the great trees of our forests. Once again, man's image is modified. It is quite time for us to recall, as a necessary counter-poison, the veterans with the long pikes, the impassive Parises in front of whom the naked women, with beplumed hats and large shadows, pass in procession; and the face of Thisbe who, to fulfill her love, all her love, stabs herself with a dagger over the body of her young lover.

[*Translated by* PETER WATSON]

## THE PEASANT PAINTERS OF APPENZELL

DR. CHRISTOPHE BERNOULLI

My dear friend,

When you arrived this summer as one of the first people to come from England, heartily welcomed by the numerous friends you have in this country, the fact did not escape your ever open eyes that the Confederation in its enforced isolation had turned its attention inwards and that besides the very dangerous over-estimation which must inevitably result from such self-absorption, the positive effect has been an enlargement and increase in depth in the knowledge of our own popular art. This is why you asked me to give you a short report of the chief results.

In 1941 the Basler Kunsthalle, which, until that date had only opened its doors to works of high art, carried out a long-cherished plan of an exhibition of Swiss popular art. This exhibition was a great success and enlarged the general understanding of the elements that had already been shown at the National-Swiss-Exhibition at Zürich in 1939. The biggest surprise came from the eastern corner of our country and especially from the canton of Appenzell, of whose works of art, particularly

of the nineteenth century, we now have a distinct and complete knowledge. This hard-working and cheerful peasant population which chiefly lives on the dairy and textile trades (embroidery of St. Gall, etc.) shows, until the middle of the nineteenth century, an astonishing unity in the variety of all its cultural forms which claims one's highest admiration. The structure of their houses, their household tools, their everyday and Sunday costumes and especially their painted furniture show such a degree of originality in design and colouring that I regret you have no space to illustrate them. Perhaps some day we may be able to organize an Appenzellese exhibition in London; it would give your countrymen a fuller appreciation of the character and originality of the Swiss people than the most eloquent newspaper article. However, the picture of this canton and its peculiarities would not be complete if I forgot to mention its most astonishing phenomenon: the Appenzell peasant painters. I myself have formerly tried to explain these painters as a remainder of a dying popular art. But recently I have changed my opinion and think differently of them now. These painters who sign their tiny landscapes are neither specifically rustic nor Appenzellese—they are only primitive like all naïve, infantile and 'idiopathic' artists. Naturally the subject-matter of their pictures is dependent on their environment and all of them continually repeat the same elements. The essential is the form; it is never a pure copy of nature but a primitive composition born out of the artist's compulsion without the slightest side-glance towards the spectator. These artists build up their own world as a child does.

The photograph reproduced (between pages 132 and 133), a picture by Barthelmy Laemmler (property of the Museum of St. Gall), shows three well-known high mountains in the Swiss eastern Alps. Lucas Lichtenhan who, more than anyone else in Switzerland, has cultivated a true appreciation for popular art, comments on this picture as follows: 'Laemmler is a grand story-teller, a first-rate maker of fables. When a peasant farmer ordered a picture of his livestock, the painter distributed the animals over the entire canvas with a gaiety of colour which delights us. There are many errors of perspective; in the background for instance, where even the remotest ridge is rendered on the same scale as the foreground. A further error of perspective may be noted in the cow behind the alpine herdsman moving manure

with his shovel. Here its hind leg can be seen appearing in front of the back of the cow standing below.'

But all these liberties only increase the freshness of the narrative. The complete lack of perspective in the enumeration of every single object emphasizes the decorative character of these paintings and their relationship to oriental carpets. All the various objects are threaded across the surface like beads on a string. In a picture by Laemmler or by any other Appenzell peasant painter we can never find a cow or a goat etc. painted from in front or from the back.

The picture by Zuelle (facing page 133) is a typical example of primitive art. The rigid, almost geometrical order in horizontal rows corresponds to the arrangement of all movable objects and is given in full front view. The elimination of normal perspective and the lack of naturalism adds to the decorative character of this type of picture. The field of representation is limited to the every-day life and the environment of the alpine peasant. The artist, having found his personal manner, sticks to it for all his life with very little variation. Here the fundamental question arises: is the primitive artist incapable of better, more realistic representation or is his limitation voluntary?

A comparison of Laemmler's and Zuelle's pictures shows Laemmler as the more imaginative and poetical temperament, whereas Zuelle's somewhat acid, rigid landscapes affirm their derivation from the craft of embroidery. His landscape is divided by three horizontal lines which look as if they were drawn with a ruler. There is no third dimension in his pictures, and no depth. Note for instance that the small climbing trees in front of the stables are simply cut off by the gutter in the roof. Anything disturbing the rule of representation is eliminated. In spite of this two-dimensional structure, the sense of space is conveyed and the small trees on the horizon seem to strive towards the sky and give a proof of the painter's creative gift. Here we should mention the very special work of Arnold Pfister, who has made a theoretical examination of 'frontality' and of 'profilism' and who has considerably deepened our knowledge of the nature of real popular art. In his researches, he plainly discloses the relationship of the paintings of popular artists with those of naïve painters by showing their typically human and primitive qualities by means of picture-analysis. The general interest for peasant painting helped to prove that these naïve painters have congenial sympathies

and feelings in all countries but that at the same time, something supra-national links them together. We used to believe that this relationship existed only in the realm of geometrical ornamentation, masks and idols—in the service of magic, whereas we now also see that the more individual artistic personalities belong together and that there is a link between all these similar talents.

To anyone coming to Switzerland from England in the hope of being able to discover, study and admire living peasant art at its source, I am regretfully compelled to admit that this popular art has died away in the age of machines and that its unconscious naïve creative force is extinct. In some compensation for this, the highly commendable efforts of the *Heimatwerk*, a commercial organization of home industries, have succeeded in providing us with good copies and in ensuring a certain preservation of tradition, at least for such articles of daily use as textiles, straw and woodwork.

But the time will come when we shall have to acknowledge these childlike creative natures as real artists. For they too help us to look into the human spirit and, by their landscapes, into the general world character. It would indeed be a very great pleasure for me to show with your help in England a few carefully chosen examples of this art.

Yours with best wishes,

CHRISTOPHE BERNOULLI

[Translated by PETER WATSON]

## HEINRICH WÖLFFLIN: HIS MEANING FOR EUROPE

DR. GEORG SCHMIDT

(Director of the Municipal Art Collections in Basle)

It was, I might say, almost a salutary shock to be invited by the Editor of HORIZON to mark the death of Heinrich Wölfflin, by writing a short article on the significance of the man who was unquestionably the greatest art historian of our time:

It is not only since 1939 that those of us in Switzerland who write and speak German have recognized an increasing cleavage



between writing in German and feeling as a German, and have felt a growing responsibility as German-Swiss to think in European, even in universal, terms, thereby preserving a body of universal thought expressed in the German language. Yet none of us has really been able to free himself completely from the natural and (in favourable circumstances) desirable interconnection between linguistic idiom and thought-content.

Nor was 1933 the first year which signified for those German-Swiss with a European vision, a breach between 'German' thought and the written word. This occurred first at a much earlier date, namely in the year 1813 when the German rising against Napoleon, which began as a fight for European democracy, was side-tracked on to feudal-nationalistic lines. It occurred again in the year 1848, when the democratic and republican revolution in Germany was sacrificed to the growing imperialism of the Prussian monarchy. The breach between German and European thought reached its extreme in the First World War. The German defeat in 1918 was followed by a short period of *rapprochement*. But by 1930 the breach was already as wide again as ever before.

To my own surprise, this opportunity of writing for English readers an account of Wölfflin's achievement—measured for once by absolute European standards and not simply as a leader of German thought—has helped me to see more clearly than before the indubitable greatness but also the limitations of his thought.

Wölfflin's supreme contribution to art history, which has European validity in the fullest sense, is his absolute insistence that the study of art must be based on the formal analysis of the visual experience of individual works. Wölfflin never wearied of restating that a work of art is primarily a visible, formal image and that, therefore, in looking at works of art one should confine oneself primarily to what can be seen, to the thing and its form.

In this essential respect there is a similarity between Wölfflin's contribution in the field of art studies and that of Cézanne in the field of art, both of which are of equal European significance. For we shall always speak of the pre- and post-Wölfflin schools of art history, just as we speak of art before and after Cézanne.

However, if we carry artistic analysis one step further—from what has to what will have form, from the created to the creating,

from the product to the producer—then Wölfflin's conceptions fail. For Wölfflin provides us with no key to understanding the psychological determination of form by the artist's character and experience. And if we look beyond the psychological conditions peculiar to the individual and consider how the creation and mutation of forms may be determined by social necessity, then we shall find that not only Wölfflin, but almost every art historian, breaks down. And yet even the psychology of the individual is only in part innate in his character and explicable as such. At the very least, an equally large part of his psychic acts are reactions against the influence of his surroundings. But the life process of a work of art does not emanate simply from the reaction of one individual to his surroundings, nor does it end with the act of creation. Before the act of creation there exist, whether expressed or not, the requirements of the customer, and after the act the customer's reaction to the thing created and through it to the creator. The individual artifact is embedded in the psychic framework of the creating individual just as he in his turn is embedded in the wider reality of his social surroundings. Thus a really comprehensive study of art history will only be possible when an equally precise set of concepts as exists already for describing the objects themselves has been forged to describe the individual creator, the society whose wishes he executes and which supports him, and the limitations of both. But we are still a long way from that!

Now Wölfflin did not derive the categories of his formal analysis just from any works of art: he concentrated on a particular historical period. To be more precise: he concentrated not on *one particular* period in history, but on *two consecutive* periods. And his theory was not primarily designed to isolate form as such, but to bring out the contrast between the formal vocabulary of the one period and the formal vocabulary of its successor; between, that is to say, the Renaissance and the Baroque. Wölfflin's famous pairs of conceptions, which he calls *The Fundamentals of Art History*, are the product of his exceptional study and intense experience of the formal antithesis between the two periods. Wölfflin's *Fundamentals* are as clear and comprehensible as all antithetical conceptions; but like all purely antithetical conceptions they are dangerous and of limited validity.

No historical development can be expressed in terms of a duality. Development can only be expressed by the dialectical trinomial of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, which means that every thesis is in its turn the antithesis of a preceding thesis and simultaneously the synthesis of a preceding antithesis. Thus synthesis is never the end but always at the same time the thesis for a new development.

We cannot help realizing how failure to think historically made it possible for Wölfflin to stick at the Renaissance as thesis and the Baroque as antithesis once we are aware that though, for example, the contrast between Raphael and Rubens can be expressed as a contrast between a 'linear' and a 'painterly' approach, yet Raphael on the one hand is 'painterly' in relation to Masaccio and Rubens on the other is 'linear' in relation to Tiepolo. Going further back, Giotto is 'linear' in relation to Masaccio; and going forwards the Impressionists are 'painterly' in relation to Tiepolo. However, going back beyond Giotto to the Romanesque, and coming forwards from Impressionism to modern art, Wölfflin's *Fundamentals* lose even their purely relative meaning. Wölfflin's categories are as useless to describe all pre-classical art before it became naturalistic, as they are to describe all post-classical art after it ceased to be naturalistic. Yet, largely on account of Cézanne, these are the very periods which concern the art historians of the post-Wölfflin era.

But with his concepts Wölfflin can only describe and cannot explain the mutation of form from the Renaissance to the Baroque. He can only supply the answer to the question 'How has the form changed?' He has no answer to questions of history such as 'Why did the form change?' However, no art historian has ever asked himself the question 'How?' with such determination, nor answered it so concretely, as Wölfflin. That is his great contribution. And the younger generation of art historians should not try to undo Wölfflin any more than modern painters can with impunity undo Cézanne. But there is a task ahead of us: to forge concepts capable of expressing with the same precision as Wölfflin's the form world of both pre- and post-classical art, and of expressing also the sociological and the individual psychological determinants of form and its mutations.

The development from the Renaissance to the Baroque is a phenomenon of European significance and Wölfflin's

comprehensive analysis of this development may be of European interest, yet in science we cannot overlook the historical standpoint of the observer. For even the scientific observer is not outside his own time, no matter how little he is aware of it. Wölfflin's master, Jakob Burckhardt (b. 1818) made no secret of his standards of artistic value; he turned his back on the realism of the Impressionists and escaped into what was for his time the nearest to Renaissance idealism, namely the art of Arnold Böcklin (b. 1827). In their youth both Burckhardt and Böcklin shared the democratic-realist outlook of the movement that led to the revolution of 1848 in Germany; but before 1848 both of them had taken refuge in what was, from a European point of view, a belated form of classicism.

The step that Wölfflin took from the 'linear' classicism of the Renaissance to the 'painterly' Baroque exactly corresponds to the advance of Hans von Marées (b. 1836) over Böcklin. Like Cézanne, who was three years his junior, Marées was passionately concerned with form. But, whereas Cézanne built his new form language out of the disintegration of colour—the great achievement of the Impressionists—and shared with the Impressionists a realistic outlook, Marées could never escape from the classicistic mode of thought no matter how much he aspired to non-naturalistic form.

When considered in terms of Europe, the Classicist tendencies of the latter half of the nineteenth century are seen to have been a product of the anti-democratic, monarchical reaction: Böcklin and Feuerbach in Germany, Puvis de Chavannes in France. Marées stands as a tragic and undecided figure between monarchical reaction and democratic progress, whereas Cézanne stands firmly on the side of the progressive forces in Europe. The fact that spiritually Wölfflin's (b. 1864) position does not correspond to Cézanne's but to Marées' is proof enough that he is closely linked with the specifically German lines of thought which prevailed in the decades before the First World War. It was at that time characteristic of large sections of the bourgeoisie, even in Switzerland, that they closed their minds to the realistic acceptance of actuality, which characterized radical, democratic thought, and took refuge in an aristocratic ideality.

It is this attitude of Wölfflin's which is ultimately decisive in explaining the curious fact that in his mind the ontogenetic antithesis

Renaissance-Baroque (which has general European validity) cuts across the nationalistic, anti-historical antithesis between 'German and Italian feeling for form'. Indeed, since the nineteenth century, it has been part of the paraphernalia of German Nationalism to see the whole of Germany's past in terms of a time-defying racial antithesis expressed as 'German-foreign', 'German-Latin' or 'Gothic-Classical', and to talk either of a basic German longing for the Mediterranean-Classical or *vice versa*, according to the current state of political relations between Germany and Italy. For example, the German Renaissance (Dürer and Holbein) is now accused of being a betrayal of the basic German-Gothic feeling for form. Naturally Wölfflin, in his book *Italy and the German Feeling for Form*, published in 1931, never descended to the depths of nationalistic phraseology. But there is, nevertheless, an irreconcilable contradiction between on the one hand the nationalistic, time-defying conclusions of this book (which depend on an identification of classical art with 'Italian'), and on the other, the *Fundamentals of Art History*, in which the conclusions have, like all true historical concepts, a supra-national validity and relate to a very definite stage of historical development.

[Translated by DOUGLAS COOPER]

## SWISS COMPOSERS OF TODAY

### ERNEST ANSERMET

IN the musical sphere, Switzerland is characterized by the fact that she gives no scope for nationalism. That does not mean that the Swiss musician, whether he be composer, performer or listener, is not strongly marked by his race: he is Germanic or Gallic (the Italian community, peasants, artisans and hotel-keepers, have, as yet, no significant musical life), but this racial character does not, so to speak, infuse his body; it remains an individual trait in a musician who lives in the midst of a wider culture. A French or a German composer almost inevitably participates in the fate of his national culture; he benefits by its momentum and its prestige, and suffers from its limitations. A Swiss musician has neither this privilege nor this handicap. He is not borne forward by his



environment, but he is relatively free from binding tradition; therefore, he is more responsible than others for what he is, and has more opportunity to shape his fate: the fact is that his horizon cannot be bounded by his country. From the outset, musical life in Switzerland is organized on a plane of international cultural activity; Switzerland is at the heart of this plane, and has a view down all its avenues. As a result of this, her composers are in a situation analogous to that which existed for the European composer before the advent of nationalism, and this situation doubtless anticipates that which will exist for the composer in the world of tomorrow. We may talk about Swiss composers, but we may not particularize about Swiss music. For instance, we find Honegger, a Germanic musician, and one who has remained thoroughly Germanic, associating himself closely with the French musical movement; and a musician of French-Swiss stock, like Frank Martin, writing music strongly impregnated with the Germanic spirit. We are, of course, affected by our origin, but our spiritual boundary is European, and it is perhaps more necessary for us than for others that it should be so.

The only one of our living composers in whom national character may be discerned—and even then in the restricted sense of one of the national groups which constitute our State—is Othmar Schoeck. Germanic, that is to say, derived from that section of the German population where art and culture have flourished best, the music which he writes would not have been different if his region had never been federated with others, or if it had been returned to the great Reich. The author of as many *lieder* as Schubert, and of several operas, he is, together with Pfitzner, the only Germanic musician of any value since the generation of Richard Strauss and Reger, who has pursued the classico-romantic tradition without interruption.

Though Schoeck is highly rated in German-Swiss circles, we, none the less, consider the personality of Arthur Honegger to be even more significant, both in relation to our country and to music as a whole. This Parisian Swiss is distinguished amongst contemporary composers by a touch, light of course, but undeniable, of that which Beethoven would have made of our epoch, or, at least, the image of it which Romain Rolland has traced on the features of Jean Christophe. An innovator, he was one of the pioneers—along ways peculiar to himself—of the musical

revolution which took place between the two wars, yet in his innovations he remained faithful to certain permanent norms of our art. One of these norms is authenticity of sentiment. He is occasionally satisfied with little, but his mastery and his personality are manifest in the least of his works. When he gives of his best, as in the *Symphony for Strings*, the *Danse des Morts* and *Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher*, to cite only his most recent works, he attains great heights, and enriches contemporary music with his most cogent accomplishments.

A musician who has sought his style for a long time (he is over fifty) has in the last few years attained a maturity which has given him a high place in our musical life: that is Frank Martin. Three important recent works show him to be a lyric musician of great range. The first is the *Vin Herbé*, a cantata for twelve mixed voices, seven string instruments and piano, composed for Joseph Bédier's admirable version of the story of Tristan and Iseult; the second is a cycle of twenty-three songs for alto voice and chamber orchestra, the *Cornette*, for the Lay of the Love and Death of Cornet Christoph Rilke, by Rainer Maria Rilke; and the third is a short oratorio, *In Terra Pax*, for five soloists, double choir and orchestra, to a text chosen from the Bible by the composer. This last work, ordered by Radio Geneva to celebrate the end of the war, was broadcast effectively on the day of the Armistice by the Sottens transmitter, and repeated several days later in a free concert given to the public by our broadcasting institute. These three works restate eternal themes, which are astonishingly transfigured by the novelty and strength of emphasis in the music. It is by a personal application of the technical processes of Schoenberg's twelve tones, yet marked by a harmonious feeling which Schoenberg seemed to have banished from music, that Frank Martin has succeeded in forging for himself a style which gives these works the stamp of mastery and finish. There can be no doubt that his name will soon travel beyond our frontiers, and will gain further glory by a substantial output.

A dominating characteristic of many young composers in French Switzerland is their search for a polyphonic style marked by increased tonal feeling, of which Hindemith may be said to be the originator. Yet not one of them possesses Hindemith's sureness of touch, and their works in no way stand out from that uniform dullness with which we were saturated before the war. Nevertheless,

the sincere and forceful personality of Willy Burkhard has in recent years stood out in relief amongst those composers. His choral works, the oratorio *Das Jahr* in particular, have fulfilled the promise of his pre-war *Vision d'Isaïe*, and his instrumental music, *Hymnus* for orchestra, his concerti for cello and for violin, and his symphony in one movement, show him to be an interesting musician, but one from whom, I think, we may expect even more decisive evidence of quality. Besides Frank Martin, French Switzerland has a certain number of composers who extend to our land the garden of French music. They are André-François Marescotti, whose piano works, the *Aubade* and the *Concert carougeois* for orchestra, have a charming spontaneity; Jean Binet, who has just given us some intensely poetic *Chansons du mal de cœur*, as well as a fresh and pastoral *Musique de mai* for orchestra; René Gerber, Aloys Fornerod and Pierre Wissmer. The last-named has proved his worth by the success of his ballet *Le beau dimanche*, very reminiscent of pre-war Paris and *Jeune France*.

Finally, two names, unconnected with each other, and outside these groups, must yet be noted: those of Robert Oboussier and Henri Sutermeister. Oboussier, born at Antwerp, educated in France and Germany, returned to his own country, Switzerland, since the war, and is a musician whose wide culture and high spirituality inspire his rare, solitary works, condensed in expression, where a classical spirit is incarnated in an extremely modern and personal musical substance. His concert piece *Antigone* (from Sophocles), and his *Trauermusik* for orchestra are impressive because of their form, austere and yet stamped with true greatness. As for Sutermeister, he is one of those who seek to solve the æsthetic problem by conditioning their art to their practical aims, and this determination has cost him immediate success. He has dedicated himself to reviving an opera rid of the preoccupations of lyrical drama, and inspired by the ideal of Verdi. His eclectic musical language, and his technique, at once summary and subtle, skilled in 'effects', go directly to their aim. In his lyrical interpretation of the dramatic content of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'The Tempest', he has been partially successful. His next opera, *Niobe*, will no doubt be the decisive test of what may be expected from this young composer, whose tendencies have some analogy with those of Benjamin Britten.

[Translated by NATALIA GALITZINE]



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